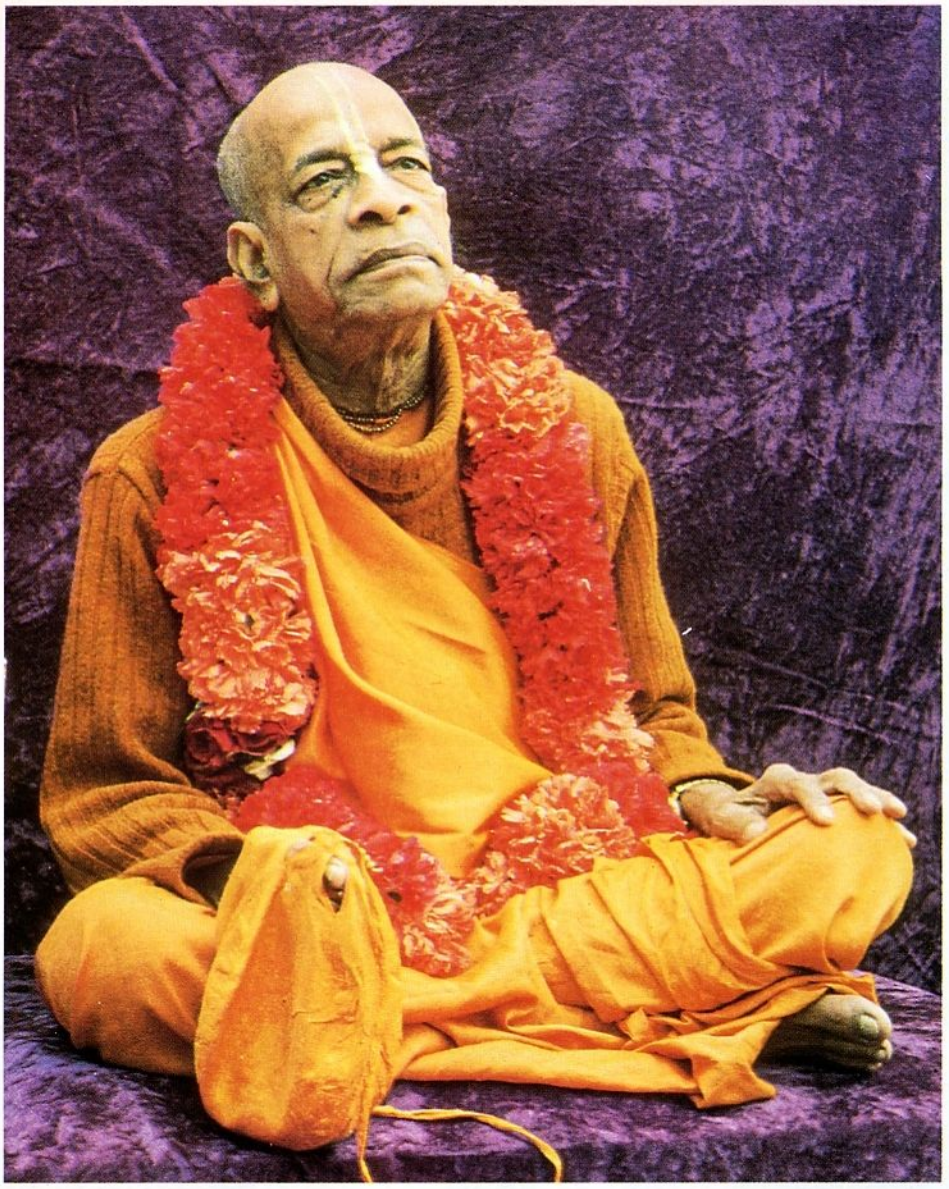
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.24 No.9 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas,* schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in Vṛndāvana, India, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



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BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

BACK TO GODHEAD

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FOUNDER (under the direction of
His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
**His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in but, long **ā** like the **a** in far (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in evade, long **ī** like the **i** in pique. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in rim, and **c** like the **ch** in chair. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch, jh, dh,** etc.) as in staun**ch-h**eart, hedge**-h**og, and red**-h**ot. Pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

SPIRITUAL NAMES. Members of the International Society for Krishna Conciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with dāsa (dāsī for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the supremely attractive person. He is known as Uttamaśloka, "one who is always glorified with transcendental poetry." If we turn our attention to the beauty of Uttamaśloka, the fountainhead of all attractive qualities, we will lose our attraction for the dim and fleeting objects of the material world. By constantly glorifying and remembering Kṛṣṇa's spiritual form, pastimes, and qualities, our lives will become auspicious, and devotional service to the Lord will be reestablished in our hearts. (Painting by Parīkṣit dāsa.)

Guided by a direct vision of the Absolute Truth,
the author of the Vedic literature
presented his ultimate contribution to human knowledge.

PERFECT VISION

A lecture in Vṛndāvana, India, on April 18, 1975
by HIS DIVINE GRACE
A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

---

anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād
bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje
lokasyājānato vidvāṁś
cakre sātvata-saṁhitām

"The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth."
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.6)

Knowledge means ultimately to understand the original source of everything. The scientists and philosophers are searching for the original cause. For example, the modern scientists are searching for the original cause of life. That is a good inquiry. But because they are surrounded by *anarthas,* superfluous things, they cannot know it. As long as one is illusioned by *māyā* [the deluding energy], he cannot have perfect knowledge.

Vyāsadeva is addressed here as *vidvān,* full of knowledge. Vyāsadeva was unhappy even after compiling *Vedānta-sūtra.* So under the instruction of his *guru,* Nārada Muni, he wanted to compile the last contribution to human society, a commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra.* That is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Vedānta* means "the ultimate knowledge." *Veda* means "knowledge," and *anta* means "the last contribution."

So under the instruction of Nārada Muni, Vyāsadeva first of all made his life perfect. Because if you write books without being perfect, they will not be effective. One has to become perfect before writing books. Nowadays, especially in the Western countries, people write any rascal ideas under the name of philosophy or science. They write, "Perhaps . . ." or "It may be . . ." That is not the system in Vedic civilization.

In Vedic civilization, only those who are advanced in Vedic knowledge can write. Vedic knowledge is called *śruti.* And if you write following the principles of *śruti,* then it is *smṛti.* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī gives this advice:

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-
pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate

"If you pose yourself as a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa without reference to the *śruti,* the *smṛti,* the *Purāṇas,* and the *Pāñcarātrika-vidhi,* that is simply a disturbance."

When Nārada instructed Vyāsadeva, "Write something that will help people understand the Supreme," then Vyāsadeva engaged himself in *bhakti-yoga,*

After having compiled the Vedic literature, the great sage Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa sits in despondency on the bank of the Sarasvatī River. Nārada Muni, his spiritual master, arrives to reveal the cause of his dejection.

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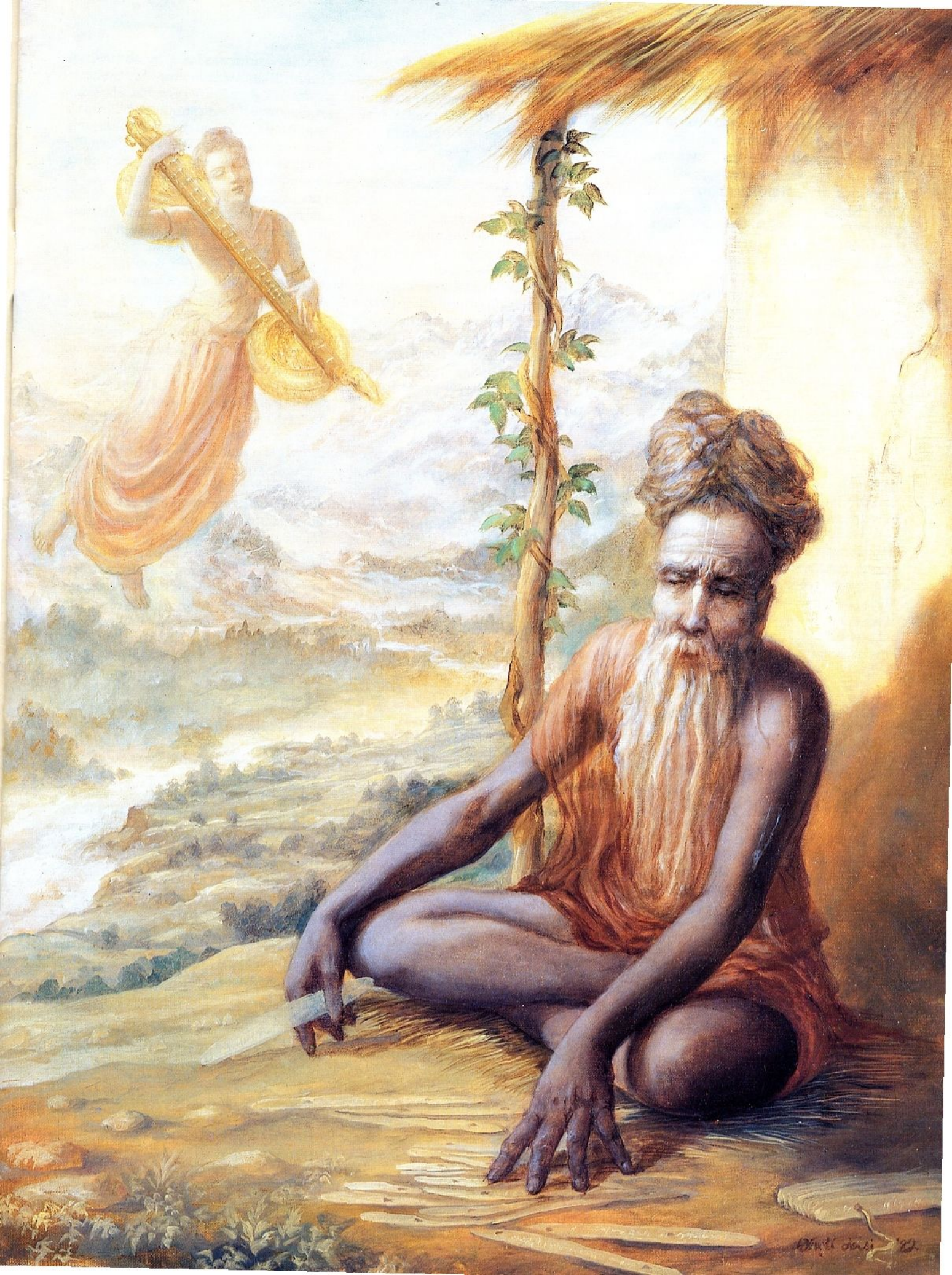


devotional service. You cannot understand the Supreme Truth without engaging yourself in devotional service. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā, bhaktyā mām abhijānāti.* Only through devotion, submission, and surrender can you understand Kṛṣṇa, not by your so-called scholarship or research work. No. *Bhaktyā mām abhijānāti.* Kṛṣṇa never said, "By cultivating speculative knowledge one can understand Me." No.

Therefore Vyāsadeva engaged himself in *bhakti-yoga* to understand the Supreme Truth. That is stated: *bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male/ apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ māyām ca tad-apāśrayam.* He visioned two things: *puruṣaṁ pūrṇam* and *māyā.*

Puruṣaṁ pūrnam means the complete or perfect Supreme Personality of Godhead. We are trying to become *puruṣa,* or Bhagavān, but we are not perfect. *Bhagavān* means *pūrṇa,* complete. So we cannot accept anyone as Bhagavān unless he is *pūrṇa.* The complete Supreme Person is Kṛṣṇa.

By meditation in *bhakti-yoga* one can understand the Supreme Truth. Real meditation means to try to find out the Supreme Person who is within everyone. That is called *yoga,* and that *yoga* is perfect when you see Kṛṣṇa. *Yoga* means to try to find Kṛṣṇa within yourself. Kṛṣṇa is there, but you have to be qualified to see Him. That is required. That is called *bhakti-yoga.*

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is said, *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti.* Seeing Kṛṣṇa is not possible simply by gymnastics. One has to develop transcendental love for Kṛṣṇa. When your eyes are anointed with love of God, then you can see Him within yourself twenty-four hours a day.

That is not difficult to understand. If you love someone, you always think of him; you always feel his presence. So the same is true of love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is teaching how to develop this love for Him. He says, *man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru:* "Simply think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer obeisances to Me."

We are spending so much money for installing the Deities of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma here. What is the purpose? The purpose is that you will be able to see Them present in this temple and therefore you can think of Them. That is very natural. If you see the Deity always, then you get His picture impressed within your mind; you will always think of Him. And the Deity is not different from Kṛṣṇa. For a devotee, the Deity is Kṛṣṇa Himself, identical.

We are spending so much money not for worshiping a statue. That would not be very intelligent. The Deity is directly Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the temple is a sanctified place. If you follow the process of seeing the Deity regularly, your mind will be cleansed. When the mind is cleansed of all dirty things, then you can think of Kṛṣṇa.

So Vyāsadeva first of all made his life perfect by practicing *bhakti-yoga,* and then he wrote this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* Therefore you will find that in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* each word is transcendental. Each word is full of meaning and transcendental knowledge, because the writer of this transcendental book is Vyāsadeva, and he is perfect. He is known as Vedavyāsa, "perfect in Vedic knowledge."

Vyāsadeva saw the complete Supreme Personality of Godhead. And he also saw *māyā. Māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam. Māyā* was behind Him. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, has *māyās* [energies] of different kinds because He has to execute so many affairs in both the material world and the spiritual world. Just imagine! The universes are so big, and there are innumerable universes. In each universe there are innumerable planets. In each planet there are innumerable towns and cities. In each town there are innumerable living entities. And Kṛṣṇa has to manage all of them. That is Kṛṣṇa. Therefore He is called Parameśvara, "the supreme controller." And Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā, sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭhaḥ:* "I am living in everyone's heart."

> *You will find that in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam each word is transcendental. Each word is full of meaning and transcendental knowledge, because the writer of this transcendental book is Vyāsadeva, and he is perfect.*

Kṛṣṇa has to act in such a way that whatever we are doing is under His direction. For example, Kṛṣṇa says *mattaḥ smṛtiḥ:* "From Me comes remembrance." In the morning you get up, and immediately you understand that you were sleeping and that now you have to do so many things. So where has this memory come from? Kṛṣṇa says, *mattaḥ:* "From Me." Just imagine how busy Kṛṣṇa is!

So the *māyā* that is controlling the material world was seen by Vyāsadeva. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is also *māyā.* She is *yoga-māyā.* And Durgā is *māyā.* She is an expansion of Rādhārāṇī. But Durgā's business is different from Rādhārāṇī's business. Durgā's business is to keep the living entities covered so that they don't awaken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is her duty.

Vyāsadeva saw the Supreme Person, and he saw *māyā* behind the Supreme Person. Which *māyā*? *Yayā sammohito jīva*—that *māyā* which is keeping the living entities in illusion. What is that illusion? Under the influence of *māyā,* we are identifying with the different *guṇas,* or qualities of this material world: goodness [*sattva-guṇa*], passion [*rajo-guṇa*], and ignorance [*tamo-guṇa*]. *Sattva-guṇa* is the brahminical qualification. Someone is thinking, "I am a *brāhmaṇa.*" Someone under the control of *rajo-guṇa* is thinking, "I am a *kṣatriya.*" This misidentification is all over the world. You may not think, "I am a *brāhmaṇa,*" but you may think, "I am an American." Or I may think I am an Indian. There is some sort of identification. Therefore the whole world is full of *anarthas,* unnecessary things. I am not a *brāhmaṇa;* I am not Indian; you are not American; you are not a *kṣatriya.* These are all false identifications.

This misidentification is the work of *māyā.* All living entities are under certain impressions: "I am this"; "I am that." And based on "I am this," "I am that," they cannot make any solutions to the problems of life. The leaders have created the United Nations, but there are no solutions. Why? Because everyone is under the grip of *māyā,* the material energy, and they are simply creating problems. This is their business.

I am spirit soul, and I do not belong to these material qualities. Still I am thinking that I am a product of the material nature. One cannot go beyond these three *guṇas: sattva-guṇa, rajo-guṇa, tamo-guṇa,* or mixed. There are 8,400,000 species of living entities under the impression that "I am a dog"; "I am a plant"; "I am a fish"; "I am a mosquito"; "I am a man"; "I am a demigod"; "I am a tiger"; "I am an Indian"; "I am an American." In this way there are 8,400,000 different types of identification. Therefore we find so many forms of life. This is all the work of *māyā* to keep us under a certain impression. And we work under a certain impression and create another situation. Then we get another body.

If in this life I create a situation like a dog's, then in my next life I will get the body of a dog, that's all. Or if I create a situation like the demigods', then I can go to the heavenly planets. But if I create a situation as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, they I go to Kṛṣṇa. This is wanted. This is

the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Don't create a situation that "I am this," "I am that." Simply create this situation: "I completely understand that I have no other business than to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and that my only duty is to serve Kṛṣṇa." This is wanted.

How one can attain this position is described in today's verse: *anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje.* This is the remedy: all unnecessary things can be removed by devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

But as long as I think, "I am this," "I am that," then I am still in illusion. Thinking "I am a big *gosvāmī*" or "I am a big *brāhmaṇa*" is also an *anartha.* The actual *gosvāmī* is one who has control over his senses. We have to control our senses and properly identify ourselves. We should think, "I do not belong to anything of this material infection, but I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa." That is called self-realization or *mukti.*

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the definition of *mukti* has been given: *muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ. Anyathā rūpam* means that I identify myself as this and that: "I am American"; "I am Indian"; "I am a *brāhmaṇa*"; "I am a *gosvāmī.*" No. These are all *anarthas,* unwanted. We are living under the wrong impression. Therefore it is said, *hitvānyathā rūpam*—"giving up the wrong impression." And *sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ* means "situated in one's original position." That is called *mukti. Mukti* does not mean anything else. This is the definition of *mukti.* You keep yourself in your original position.

So our original position is that we are part and parcel of the body of Kṛṣṇa. The *brāhmaṇa* is the mouth of Kṛṣṇa, and the *kṣatriyas* are the arms of Kṛṣṇa. The *vaiśyas* are the abdomen of Kṛṣṇa, and the *śūdras* are the legs of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore nobody should be hated. Kṛṣṇa is *advaya,* absolute. Ordinarily we may make some distinction between the head and the leg. The leg is less important; the head is more important. But any part of Kṛṣṇa is as important as any other part. So if you come to realize that you are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, then whether you act as Kṛṣṇa's leg or as Kṛṣṇa's head, there is no difference.

Here in the material world we have misunderstood that because I am the head [*brāhmaṇa*], therefore I shall hate the legs [*śūdras*]. But why should we think like that? We first of all offer *tulasī* and flowers to the legs of Kṛṣṇa, not to the head. *Bhakti-yoga* begins from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. So how can you say that Kṛṣṇa's legs are inferior to His head? Such a misunderstanding is called an *anartha.*

If we enter into the process of *bhakti-yoga,* these *anarthas* will go away. Therefore it is recommended here in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje:* if you engage yourself in transcendental loving service of Adhokṣaja, the Supreme Person who is beyond your sense perception, your *anarthas* will be finished.

When your *anarthas* are finished and you see every living entity as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, that is called real Brahman realization. Every one of us is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. So we should engage not only ourselves in Kṛṣṇa's service, but we should try to engage others also, because they are also part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Why should we exclude them? That is Vaiṣṇavism. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And that is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission.

That mission is to be started from India. Indians especially have the opportunity to learn these Vedic *śāstras* [scriptures], become self-realized, and introduce this Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission.

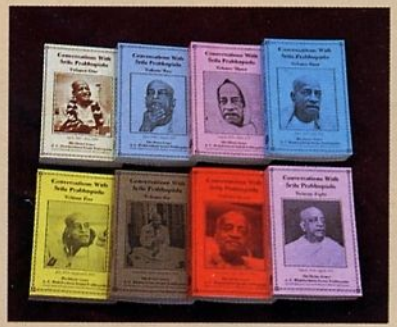
So every Vaiṣṇava's duty is to make his life perfect by understanding his real position and then to preach. All people

(*continued on page 20*)

Ever Wish You Could Have Talked With Prabhupāda?

Thousands of people did, and you can be there. From 1967 to 1977, more than 800 conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda were recorded on tape. They reveal the nature of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa who was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness while at the same time committed and involved in a very practical way as a preacher and leader of a worldwide movement.

Conversations With Śrīla Prabhupāda



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The *yoga* most people are familiar with isn't meant for everyone. In fact, in this age it's hardly possible for anyone.

YOGA THAT WORKS

by DHANURDHARA SWAMI

The Vedic literature tells of the sage Viśvāmitra's failure to become self-realized after sixty thousand years of rigid *yoga* practice, revealing how difficult it is for even the accomplished transcendentalist to reach perfection by the process of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga.* In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa was naturally concerned when Arjuna expressed a desire to leave the battlefield for a life of meditation. When, in the Sixth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa presents an analysis of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga,* Arjuna finds it too difficult, and Kṛṣṇa recommends a more feasible process.

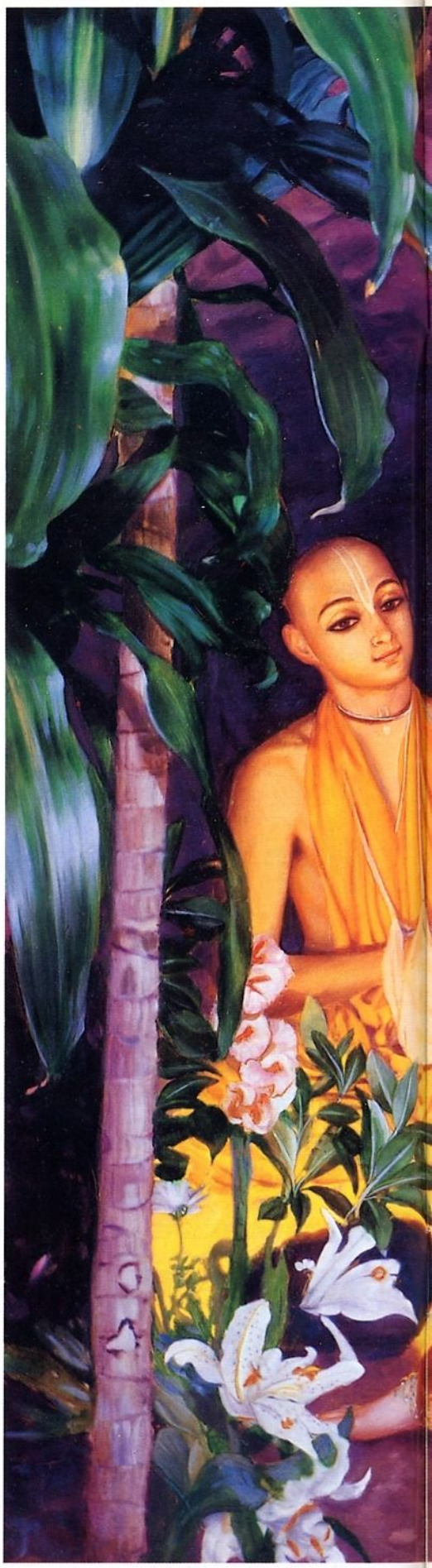
To properly understand *aṣṭāṅga-yoga,* one of the many systems of *yoga* described in *Bhagavad-gītā,* one must first have a clear understanding of what *yoga* is.

The term *yoga* literally means "linking" and refers to linking one's consciousness with the Supreme. The different yogic processes are named for the particular method adopted to reawaken one's relationship with the Supreme. For example, when the linking process is predominantly through one's work (*karma*), it is called *karma-yoga,* and when it is predominantly through philosophical analysis (*jñāna*), it is called *jñāna-yoga.*

Aṣṭāṅga means "eight parts," and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* is an eight-step process of linking with the Supreme Lord through meditation on His form within the heart. It emphasizes controlling one's mind. The materially conditioned mind is absorbed in contemplating objects of sensual pleasure: sounds, tastes, sights, and so on. By stripping the mind of external engagements and developing spiritual conviction, the advanced *yogī* directs his mind to an awareness of the Supersoul.

Aṣṭāṅga-yoga thus offers a feasible process for self-realization, and it certainly appeared to Arjuna to be a possible solution to his anxieties—that is, until Lord Kṛṣṇa explained the qualifications of a prospective *yoga* candidate:

> To practice *yoga,* one should go to a secluded place and should lay *kuśa* grass on the ground and then cover it with a deerskin and soft cloth. The seat should be neither too high nor too low and should be situated in a sacred place. The *yogī* should then sit and firmly practice *yoga* to purify the heart by controlling his mind, senses, and activities and fixing his mind on one point. One should hold one's body, neck, and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Thus, with an unagitated, sub-



While chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* in Benapola, West Bengal, the great devotee Haridāsa Ṭhākura is tested by Māyādevī, the personification of the Lord's illusory energy.

Painting by Yadurāṇī-devī dāsī ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

> dued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.11–14)

Although Arjuna was a great warrior of the royal family and a close friend of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because he had responsibilities in his family life and occupation he represents the common man. He therefore expresses to Lord Kṛṣṇa his doubt about achieving success by a *yoga* process that requires one to stay in a secluded place for the rest of one's life.

Furthermore, even if such retirement were possible, who but the most elevated renunciants could tolerate the rigid manner of sitting necessary for eventual perfection? Therefore, in an honest estimation of his capabilities, Arjuna rejects the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* process as a suitable method for his enlightenment:

> O Madhusūdana, the system of *yoga* which You have summarized appears impractical and undesirable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady. The mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate, and very strong, O Kṛṣṇa, and to subdue it, I think, is more difficult than controlling the wind. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.33–34)

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa had spent considerable time explaining this system of *yoga* to Arjuna, He basically agrees with Arjuna's analysis: "O mighty-armed son of Kuntī, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind. . . ." Unlike Arjuna, though, Kṛṣṇa does see a path to *aṣṭāṅga-yoga's* eventual success, for He adds: ". . . but it is possible by constant practice and detachment."

The question therefore arises: What is the practice for controlling the mind, for certainly almost no one in this age can observe the strict rules and regulations of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga,* which demand restraining the senses and mind, observing celibacy, remaining isolated, and so on? The answer to how *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* can be practiced successfully is found in an understanding of Vedic cosmology.

According to the Vedic literature, time in our universe proceeds in cycles of 4,300,000 years, which for our purposes can be called millennia. Each millennium is divided into four ages, called *yugas,* which rotate like seasons and have their own characteristics. According to the capabilities of the populace in each age, a particular practice of *yoga* is recommended. For example, in the Satya-yuga people live 100,000 years and are endowed with exceptional qualities of goodness. The *Vedas* thus enjoin, *kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum:* "In Satya-yuga, meditation on Viṣṇu [*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*] is recommended."

The *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken to Arjuna before the beginning of Kali-yuga, the last and most degraded part of the millennium. For most people today, even

simple spiritual endeavors seem beyond them. The *Vedas* thus recommend, *kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt:* "In the age of Kali, *bhakti-yoga* based on chanting the names of the Supreme Lord is recommended."

Although *bhakti-yoga* is a simple process compared to the rigors of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga, bhakti-yoga* based on the chanting of the Lord's holy name is nonetheless considered the perfection of *yoga.* The perfection of any *yoga* system is achieved when the mind becomes incapable of deviating from the Supreme. This final stage of absorption is called *samādhi* and is described by Lord Kṛṣṇa at the completion of His description of the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system: "A true *yogī* observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees Me, the same Supreme Lord, everywhere."

A *bhakti-yogī* is naturally fixed in this vision, because out of devotion he busily engages his senses in serving the Supreme Lord. Furthermore, because of the pleasure derived from such loving devotion, his mind remains fixed even in the midst of the greatest allurements.

In contrast to Viśvāmitra Muni's failure to achieve success by *aṣṭāṅga-yoga,* we find the example of the great devotee Haridāsa Thākura, who resisted the temptation of the Lord's illusory energy personified—an incomparably beautiful woman. Haridāsa's perfection illustrates the superiority of the *bhakti-yoga* process of chanting the Lord's holy name. The lives of the devotees of the Lord thus confirm His last instruction about *yoga* in the Sixth Chapter of the *Gītā:* "And of all *yogīs,* the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all. That is My opinion."

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
41 West Allens Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

LETTERS

Hare Kṛṣṇa! Having read several copies of *Back to Godhead,* I notice you often quote the Bible regarding the eating of meat. But you neglect the best quotes. You point out that when the cow's blood is transformed into milk, it is purified and suitable for drinking. Why not cite Biblical passages like those in Genesis 9, Leviticus 17, and Acts 15, which specifically forbid blood?

M. Fredrichberg
Marrabundah, N.S.W., Australia

OUR REPLY: Sometimes we quote the Bible because, after all, we're circulating amid a largely Judeo-Christian society. For every passage we adduce to condemn meat-eating, however, the carnivore who calls himself a Christian will cite another to justify it. The fact is, the Bible is ambiguous on this issue. After the great flood, God revised His original ban on eating flesh (Genesis 9:3), as a concession to human weakness. Despite the concessions and justifications, though, the passages you cite remind us that God is continually trying to raise us to a higher consciousness of Him.

Arjuna, the hero of *Bhagavad-gītā,* represents the ideal level of God consciousness. Unlike the multitudes of the Old and New Testaments, he is completely submissive to the Absolute Truth. And that's what he gets. "If one offers Me with love and devotion," the Supreme Personality of Godhead tells him and all of us, "a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I will accept it."

For the true spiritualist, meat-eating is unacceptable, as the *Gita* makes crystal clear. The person who chews flesh and gives thanks to God would do well to remember that the Bible begins and ends in a kingdom where the sound of slaughter is unknown. If he wants more proof, then let the flesh-eating religionist visit a slaughterhouse and hear that terrible sound. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15).

* * *

I have to congratulate you for the wonderful work you are doing in publishing such an exciting magazine. I eagerly look forward to the arrival of the magazine each month. I sincerely feel that *Back to Godhead* is very valuable and a step in the right direction in the process of God realization.

According to Śrīla Prabhupāda, one needs a *guru* for spiritual advancement. But is it not possible to go back to Godhead by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and following the teachings of God? Sometimes it might be difficult for people living in different parts of the world to find a real *guru.* I would appreciate your advice on this matter.

Prasada A. Iragavarapu, M.D.
Boca Raton, Florida

OUR REPLY: If you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and abide by the teachings of God, it is indeed possible to go back to Godhead. But following the teachings of God means accepting a spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* (4.34), "Just try to understand the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth."

So if we're actually following Kṛṣṇa's orders, one of the first things we'll do is sincerely seek out a bona fide *guru.* This is one of the Lord's first and foremost instructions to Arjuna, as well as to all of us.

In the Eleventh Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* there is another verse, spoken by the Lord to Uddhava, describing some of the qualifications of the spiritual master: "The qualification of the bona fide *guru* is that he has realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters."

And there is another verse, from the *Ādi Purāṇa,* where the Lord describes the supreme position of service to His devotees: "One who considers himself to be directly My devotee is not actually My devotee. But one who thinks himself the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee."

So taking shelter of and serving the spiritual master is essential for making spiritual advancement. One important consideration to bear in mind is that Kṛṣṇa wants us to come home, back to Godhead, and He's willing to train us, no matter how slow we may be. An integral part of that training is learning how to associate with and serve His devotees, who are His representatives. When we achieve the spiritual realm, we'll be serving devotees, for the Lord is not alone there. He is surrounded by millions of servants and loved ones. If we don't learn clearly how to serve His devotees in this life, then how will we be qualified to serve them in the next? We must be eager for and expert at this most important service.

You mention the difficulty of not being in close proximity with a temple or devotees. But to meet a bona fide spiritual master, you will have to associate with devotees. You might be able to do this through the mail, but Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers have established temples all over the world to enable everyone to associate with devotees. So you can go to the temple as much as possible, and you can invite devotees to your home. Somehow or other you have to get to know devotees, and then it will only be a matter of time before Kṛṣṇa sends you a bona fide spiritual guide who'll inspire you in your spiritual life and help you in your journey back to Godhead.

Coming to Kṛṣṇa

Proof Without Pain

His college philosophy course got him started on a search.
He wondered if it would ever end.

by BHARATAŚREṢṬHA DĀSA

Your assignment, William, is 'The Existence of God.' " The assignment for the term was to read original source material presenting ontological, teleological, and cosmological arguments for the existence of God, then to present an overview of the arguments orally near the end of the semester. A formal term paper was due the last day of class.

The assignment did not repulse me as much as I had feared it would. Just lately my roommate and I had had a lengthy discussion on the value of God. While freely admitting a belief in God, he practiced no religion, nor did he consider God much of an influence on his life. I, on the other hand, as an avowed atheist, was greatly troubled by the fact that so many people candidly confess a belief in a transcendent power. Why? This semester would force me to make a thorough examination of my own beliefs, in the guise of an academic exercise.

In my research, I read Anselm of Canterbury, who defined God as "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." True by definition, I thought, which is basically what an ontological argument is. Anselm's paper revolved around discussion of a verse in Psalm 14, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' " A monk named Gaunilon responded to this essay with the argument that just because one can conceive of a thing's existence, that in no way implies that the thing does in fact exist. I hastily concluded that, while the fool's statement seemed arbitrary and insupportable, there was not much support for Anselm's argument either.

Next I delved into Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica,* a formidable work of some seventy volumes, all in Latin. Fortunately there are numerous books that excerpt segments dealing with each topic; these yielded enough material for me to get a glimpse into his mind and formulate his cosmological argument.

Aquinas rejected the ontological argument because it proved only that the existence of God was self-evident, but in no way did it prove that God could be evident *to us.* He preferred to work back from the obvious material creation. What has been created must have a creator, or in Aquinas's terms, a First Mover, a First Efficient Cause.

As I mulled this over, it occurred to me that science had come a long way toward explaining the cosmos. Also, people create. Therefore creation did not imply a transcendent creator.

I went on to David Hume. He said that God was a Maker, a maker of machines. Just as a watch has a watchmaker, so people have a people maker: God. From empirical evidence alone we can conclude that a God of some type exists. Unfortunately, to me it seemed that God had been relegated to a role that amounted to no more than a catch-all phrase to cover what we, as a civilization, had not yet discovered.

Although my project for the Introduction to Philosophy course was shaping up nicely, I was entering a period of emotional and spiritual torment. Questions like Why do I want there to be a proof of God? and Why do these great minds, whose arguments are not really "proofs," still believe in God? ran through my mind constantly. I drank a lot, sitting in my room with these books all around me, reading and rereading passages, thinking.

I did no other work, nothing. I wrote out arguments in my own words and countered them, scratching them out. I wadded up the papers and tossed them about the room. I couldn't eat. My oral presentation went well, but now that the end of the

semester was near, my paper had ceased being an academic exercise and had taken on a necessity all its own. I had to find an answer.

One night, unable to sleep, I typed out the questions How do I know there is a God? Who am I, and why am I here? Why do these great philosophers, Aquinas, Anselm, and Hume, persist in believing in God even though they are unable to convince anyone that God is real? Why? Why? Why?

I put this note, along with my name and phone number, in an envelope, walked over to the Episcopal church (I was raised Episcopalian), and nailed it to the church rectory door.

A few days later, the minister called and made an appointment for me to come and see him. I arrived quite early and was ushered into a tiny library to wait until he was free. I scanned the shelves, stopping at *Bhagavad-gītā*. I started reading, and I remember that I was annoyed when I was interrupted for my meeting.

The minister was familiar to me; I had seen him at parties. He was an expert in Christology and had a house in Jerusalem. He had lived in Beirut before the violence there. He was quite amiable, but after seeing him once a week for a while, I knew he wasn't going to have the answers to my questions.

The semester ended; I got all A's. I went to the church on Christmas, which made the minister very happy, and even I felt good, participating in a nearly forgotten childhood ritual. Nevertheless, I felt no closer to the solution to my spiritual crisis, even if my emotional one had somewhat abated.

The next semester began. I entered the classroom for Communications & Performing Arts 151, and there were coupons on every desk for a free roast beef sandwich at the cafeteria. I picked one up like it was a dead rat, saying to no one in particular, "I don't eat this stuff!" A girl near me piped up, "I don't either. I'm a vegetarian." We sat next to each other, and she introduced herself as Diane but said her friends called her Dina.

As a class assignment, we had to come up with a speech topic that was of significant personal importance. She showed me her topic: "You Are Not the Body."

How profound! I thought. This brief statement was a perfect expression of something I intuitively knew but had never been able to express. I muttered something about how we must be kindred souls.

About two weeks later I invited her for Sunday breakfast at a local French-style bistro. We talked about philosophy in general and God in particular. I had never met anyone who had such practical arguments, such a grasp of the issues, and all without having the repertoire of philosophical citations I had thought was necessary to discuss such topics. The next week I invited her over to my house for wine and cheese and talk. She said she didn't drink, but she would be glad to come.

She did, and while I drank all the wine, she explained about a life of service to God, how it changed one's perspective on life; how we are not bodies but eternal spirit souls, like God in quality but not in quantity; how God's existence is revealed, not deduced.

We started having lunch together. She asked me if I ever ate anything besides cheese sandwiches, and I told her I could cook well enough, but red meat seemed morally questionable. Chicken, with its sinewy, greasy structure made me vomit looking at it. And fish stank up the whole house. Besides, most meat is so full of chemicals that eating it is tantamount to self-poisoning. So I ate a lot of cheese sandwiches.

I went to church on Christmas, which made the minister happy, and even I felt good, participating in a nearly forgotten childhood ritual. But I felt no closer to the solution to my spiritual crisis, even if my emotional one had somewhat abated.

The following Saturday she arrived with all her pots and bottles and jars and a bag of groceries, announcing that she was going to prepare a vegetarian feast. She ejected my roommate and me from the kitchen and clanged about in there for a couple of hours while he and I absorbed the spring sunshine over a few beers. When the feast was ready, she presented it to us, serving us before she ate. She said it was spiritual food, called *prasādam*. She had me hooked. From that day on I ate nothing containing meat, fish, eggs, or even garlic and onions.

Soon after, she started referring to God as Kṛṣṇa and explained about chanting, and how it not only is a healthy meditation, but it is in fact God realization.

Eureka! This was the proof! Hume said that we could know God from direct experience. There was nothing wrong with his argument; he simply had the wrong idea of what type of experience would illustrate God's existence. But since God is transcendent, it's logical that our experience should also be transcendent. Chanting is transcendental. *Prasādam* is transcendental. Discussing the name, fame, and pastimes of the Lord are transcendental activities.

Dina took me to the ISKCON temple in Cleveland. I was a little overwhelmed by the rambunctious young men with their funny outfits and shaved heads. But they spoke so intelligently. The temple president was genuinely friendly and interested in what I had to say, taking each point I made and showing how it was resolved by the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The following week he and another devotee lectured at Oberlin College, where I lived, so I invited them to come over after the lecture, bringing any students who were interested. We had *prasādam* and informal discussion and ended the evening around midnight with a dozen or so students, Dina, and I all participating in a cheery *kīrtana* that lasted quite a long time.

That summer I married Dīna Daya dāsī in the Episcopalian church of my minister friend. The devotee priests from Cleveland performed the ceremony. The temple president lectured on the meaning of marriage as revealed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The minister lectured on how in the Christian religion marriage is founded upon the same principles of service and devotion to God. It seemed that the whole town came to hear. After the marriage, everyone was served *prasādam* in the parish hall.

In the ensuing months my new wife taught me about Deity worship and other householder responsibilities, and we made pilgrimages to many temples. Eventually I met my spiritual master and qualified for initiation.

I continue my studies of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness daily, always striving for more understanding, always conscious that the more I learn, the more I realize what I do not know. When I eventually retire from my occupation, it will be for a new life, a totally spiritual life in which my wife and I will devote all our energy to Kṛṣṇa. In the meantime, we try to keep Kṛṣṇa in the center of our marriage, we raise our children to be God conscious, and we contribute our time and the fruits of our labors to the spreading of God consciousness.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement
is not a "For Ascetics Only" club.

EVERY HOME A TEMPLE

by ROHINĪNANDANA DĀSA

Five centuries ago Lord Caitanya, who is the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, Himself and the founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, predicted that in every town and village around the globe God's holy names would be heard. Twenty-four years ago His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a devoted follower of Lord Caitanya, journeyed from India to the West and began to vigorously introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As a result, people everywhere have encountered "the Hare Kṛṣṇa experience" in the form of this *Back to Godhead* magazine; Srīla Prabhupada's books; devotees of Kṛṣṇa exuberantly chanting and dancing on the streets; devotees preaching in homes, schools, and colleges; festivals; beautiful temples; and *prasādam,* delicious vegetarian food that's been offered to Kṛṣṇa.

Despite wide exposure to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, which historians and religious

Visakha-devi dasi

writers like Thomas J. Hopkins have called an ancient "social system" and a "cultural tradition," people often think that to become a member of this Society requires extreme renunciation and disinterest in the world. People tend to stay away from Kṛṣṇa consciousness because of apprehension about the position of women, marriage, and family life. Many times I have been timidly

asked, "Can you get married in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?" when, in fact, these days you might find yourself looking over your garden wall to see a Kṛṣṇa conscious couple playing with their children.

This raises more questions: If Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees do get married and begin living alongside more "normal" members of society, do the devotees stop their fervent life of prayer and preaching? Is the serious practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness meant for just a few Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees privileged (or condemned, as some think) to live in a few temples? And is it to be expected that most others will visit the temple in between watching TV, playing golf, or going to parties? How important is Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the daily affairs of the ordinary family?

According to the Vedic literature, the age in which we are living is known as Kali-yuga, or the age of quarrel, a time of tension, disagreement, and stress. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* written five thousand years ago, predicts for Kali-yuga an atmosphere of spiritual ineptitude and consequent social decay. Things will gradually deteriorate with time, but already personal relationships are becoming fraught with difficulties. Fulfilling the dream of a happy home poses a challenge not easily met. "Burdens of love" are burdensome. Rarely do homes foster openness, good communication, respect, obedience, loyalty, and joy. Even persons who are competent outside the home find the simplest domestic problems insurmountable.

The solution to these problems lies in knowing the underlying cause of family strife: lack of a clear understanding of the goal of human life.

"But there is no goal," a mother of two once insisted to me. "There is no meaning to life."

"No meaning at all?" I queried.

"Well, the only meaning in my life is my children."

"But if your life is meaningless, how can your children make it any more meaningful?"

Of course, in daily life we do find meanings and goals to occupy and motivate us. When we awaken each morning we are flooded with considerations of wife, husband, lover, children, job, money, career, housework, or simply breakfast.

Because we are embodied souls, we tend to think of our own or others' bodily affairs as our first and foremost duty. But the *Vedas* say, "No. There is a much greater goal! Human life is meant for self-realization. If you occupy your days and nights with thoughts of your body and things related to it, you will waste an invaluable opportunity. And the subsequent anxiety, strain, and agitation will cause your loving relationships to disintegrate. Only the suffering will remain."

The *Vedas* suggest that efforts to help others that are based on the body will only aggravate the problems, and the *Vedas* therefore strongly recommend renunciation. Not just for a few monks either—for everyone.

"Wait a moment! What if everybody renounced the world and became a Hare Kṛṣṇa? How would things go on?"

"Things would not go on," Śrīla Prabhupāda used to retort, "at least not as you might think they should."

Yet Śrīla Prabhupāda did not teach that everyone should move into a temple, but simply that we should renounce our tendency for selfish and vicious activities and begin practicing spiritual life at home, or wherever we may be.

"But how can renunciation help with our family problems? As I see it, there's not *enough* attachment bonding the husband to the wife and children."

> *Selfish sensuality will prevent me from being able to appreciate my partner as a person distinct from a machine to gratify my senses, and will tend to destroy our relationship, because my partner's body is limited and my desires are unlimited.*

Yes! Not enough spiritual attachment. As much as we are attached to selfish sensual pleasures, we will remain selfish in our relationships. Selfish sensuality will prevent me from being able to appreciate my partner as a person distinct from a machine to gratify my senses, and will tend to destroy our relationship, because my partner's body is limited and my desires are unlimited. Sooner or later, I will be driven by those desires to seek out another partner with a different body and the promise of fresh pleasure.

The remedy is to awaken my spiritual understanding that a person is actually a soul, who can never be satisfied by any amount of sensual pleasure, and who needs to awaken a loving relationship with the supreme soul. As it is said, a family that prays together stays together. The more materially detached we become, the more we will be able to properly care for others.

Watering the root of a tree nourishes the entire tree. Similarly, when the members of the family seek out the source of everything—God—and try to please Him, they will find their relationships nourished with peace, unity, and joy.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā,* Chapter 7), there is a description of Lord Caitanya's method of preaching while He traveled as a *sannyāsī* (itinerant monk) in South India. He influenced the people to chant the holy names and converted them to Vaiṣṇavism, the worship and service of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

In one village a Vedic *brāhmaṇa* (priest) named Kūrma invited Lord Caitanya to his home and begged, "My dear Lord, kindly show me favor; let me go with You. I can no longer tolerate the waves of misery caused by materialistic life."

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, "Don't speak like that again. Better to remain at home and chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa always."

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments,

> It is not advisable in this age of Kali to leave one's family suddenly, for people are not trained as proper *brahmacārīs* [celibate students] and *grhasthas* [spiritually-minded householders]. Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised the *brāhmaṇa* not to be too eager to give up family life. It would be better to remain with his family and try to become purified by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* regularly under the direction of a spiritual master. This is the instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If this principle is followed by everyone, there is no need to accept *sannyāsa.* In the next verse Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised everyone to become an ideal householder by offenselessly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and teaching the same principle to everyone he meets.

The next verse states, "Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."

> This is the sublime mission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Many people come and inquire whether they have to give up family life to join the Society, but that is not our mission. One can remain comfortably in his residence. We simply request everyone to chant the *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. If one is literate and can read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* that is so much the better. These works are now available in an English translation and are done very authoritatively to appeal to all classes of men. Instead of living engrossed in

(*continued on page 20*)

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

Transcendental Commentary on the Issues of the Day

SNOWBALL FIGHTS

by Satyarāja dāsa
Brooklyn, New York

An old theory about the origin of life is again rearing its dirty head. Why dirty? Because Sir Fred Hoyle of Cambridge University is claiming that life began with what is tantamount to a dirty snowball. And people are believing him.

When Hoyle first presented his theory, in the 1940s, it was received with skepticism and even ridicule. But when he restated his claim recently, this time with complex scientific jargon, it was accepted by many of his distinguished colleagues.

Hoyle, who has been professor of astronomy at Cambridge for well over twenty years, believes that our remote ancestors were born in "dust clouds" floating around in our galaxy. Hoyle explains that these clouds contained various bacteria and viruses. Some of them were picked up by a comet that later burst into the earth's atmosphere. At this time the lifeless earth was "seeded" with life-giving cells.

There are scientists who give credence to this theory, since they already know that the tail of a comet is made up of gas and dust, and that its tiny head also contains ice particles—"life-giving" water to nurture the bacteria the comet carries. These scientists applaud Hoyle's imaginative doctrine, which he has called "the Dirty Snowball Theory."

Hoyle's snowball dogma is about to melt, however. His opposition, even at Cambridge, is growing quite strong. Hoyle's detractors include many longtime comrades, such as Cambridge mathematics professor Stephen Hawking. Once an advocate of many atheistic, snowball-like theories himself, Hawking is now making statements that proclaim God's hand in creation. According to Hawking, if a "snowball" was "thrown," there is no reason to assume that it was not thrown by an omnipotent "God." In his recent book *A Brief History of Time,* Hawking uncharacteristically writes, "There are now profound implications for the role of God as Creator." Other prominent scientists, such as Tony Rothman, are also vexing Hoyle with theistic alternatives to the snowball theory.

Some of Hoyle's detractors point out that although the dust clouds floating between the stars contain chemicals that are crucial in the chain of life—including methylated gases, formic acid, and formaldehyde—none of these elements can produce life. How can formaldehyde produce a living, thinking entity? Can Hoyle, using these "life-giving elements," produce life? This is the challenge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda similarly challenged the scientists in the 1970s. In the conversations recorded in *Life Comes From Life,* Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "If life originated from chemicals, and if your science is so advanced, then why can't *you* create life biochemically in your laboratory?" As he did not receive an answer in his day, Hoyle's opponents do not receive an answer today. The building blocks of life do not constitute a living organism any more that a snowball constitutes the North Pole.

Yet what's even more astonishing about Hoyle's theory is that it does not even address the central and most obvious question: If our ancestors were born in dust clouds or from ice particles at the tail of a comet, then where did the dust cloud and comet come from? Hoyle's hypothesis does not really answer any questions. It merely removes the problem one step.

It may be said that the dust cloud and comet are eternal—a surrogate "God," if you will—and so the question of their origin does not come into play. But observable dust clouds and comets are *not* eternal. In fact, they are quite ephemeral. According to *Bhagavad-gītā,* all matter is endlessly mutable. It adopts a particular form, is subject to entropy (it inevitably breaks down), and then it dissolves or changes form. Spirit, conversely, does not begin or end. It is constant, changeless, and primeval.

And so the battle goes on. Both Hoyle and his opponents have theories about the origin of life, as little children have snowball fights to keep active during a cold winter day. In the winter of modern times, no one really wins the fight. But the sun of Lord Krsna's *Bhagavad-gītā* has answers that can melt the hearts of all who will listen.

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Belo Horizante, MG—Rua Braz Baltazar, 146, Bairro Caicara/ Tel. (031) 2731035
Brasilia, DF—HIGS 706-Bloco C, Casa 29/ Tel. (061) 242-7579
Curitiba, PR—Rua Cel Anibal Dos Santos, 67, Vila Fany, CEP 81500
Florianópolis, SC—Rua Duarte Schutel, 61-Centro
Fortaleza, CE—Rua José Laurenço, 2114, Aldeota/ Tel. (085) 244-7068
Goiania, GO—Rua 88-C, No. 2-Setor Sul/ Tel. (062) 241-7492
Manaus, AM—Rua dos Andradas, 465, Centro/ Tel. (092) 233-3709
Pôrto Alegre, RS—Av. Prof. Ludolfo Boehl, 1199, Terezopolis, CEP 91700
Ribeirão Preto, SP—Rua Cerqueira Cesar, 480, Centro
Rio de Janeiro, RJ—Rua Dias De Barros, 43, Sta. Tereza, CEP 20241
Salvador, BA—Rua Álvaro Adorno, 17, Brotas/ Tel. (071) 244-1072
Santos, SP—Rua Nabuco de Araújo, 151-Embaré/ Tel. (0132) 21-3596
São Paulo, SP—Rua Bom Pastor, 798, Ipiranga (mail: C. P. 4855)/ Tel. (011) 63-1674
Vitória, ES—Rua Glaciliano Neves, 439, Centro, Victória

FARM COMMUNITIES

Caruaru, Pernambuco—Distrito de Murici (mail: Rua do Norte, 61, Sala 3, Centro)
Pindamonhangaba, SP (New Gokula)—Bairro Riberao Grande (mail: Caixa Postal 108, CEP 12400)/ Tel. (0122) 42-5002

RESTAURANT

Belém, Pará (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Prasāda)—Av. Gentil Bittencourt, Passagem Mac Dowell, 96 (entre Dr. Morais e Benjamin Constant/ Tel (091) 222-1886

MEXICO

Guadalajara—Pedro Moreno 1791, Sector Juarez, Jalisco/ Tel. 26-12-78
Mexico City—Gob. Tiburcio Montiel 45, San Miquel Chapultepec, Mexico, D.F. 18/ Tel. (905) 271-0132
Mexico City—Govinda's Cultural Center, Insurgentes Sur 2384-1, Mexico City 01000 D.F./ Tel. 548-9323
Monterrey—Zaragoza 1007, nte. Zona centro/ Tel. 74-69-76
Morelia—Ticateme No. 52 pte., Col. Selix Ireta 58070, Morelia, Mich.
Tijuana—Boulevard Aqua Caliente, No. 120
Vera Cruz—Calle 3, Carebelas No. 784, Fraccionamienito Reforma/ Tel. 50759

FARM COMMUNITY

Tulacingo, Hidalgo (Nueva Gauḍa-Maṇḍala Bhūmi)—(contact ISKCON Mexico City)

PERU

Arequipa—Jerusalen 402/ Tel. 229523
Cuzco—San Juan de Dios 285
Lima—Pasaje Solea 101 Santa Maria-Chosica/ Tel. 910891
Lima—Schell 634 Miraflores
Lima—Av. Garcilazo de la Vega 1670-1680Tel 259523

FARM COMMUNITY

Hare Krishna-Correo De Bella Vista—DPTO De San Martin

RESTAURANTS

Arequipa—(at ISKCON Arequipa)
Cuzco—Espáderos 128
Lima—Schell 634 Miraflores

OTHER COUNTRIES

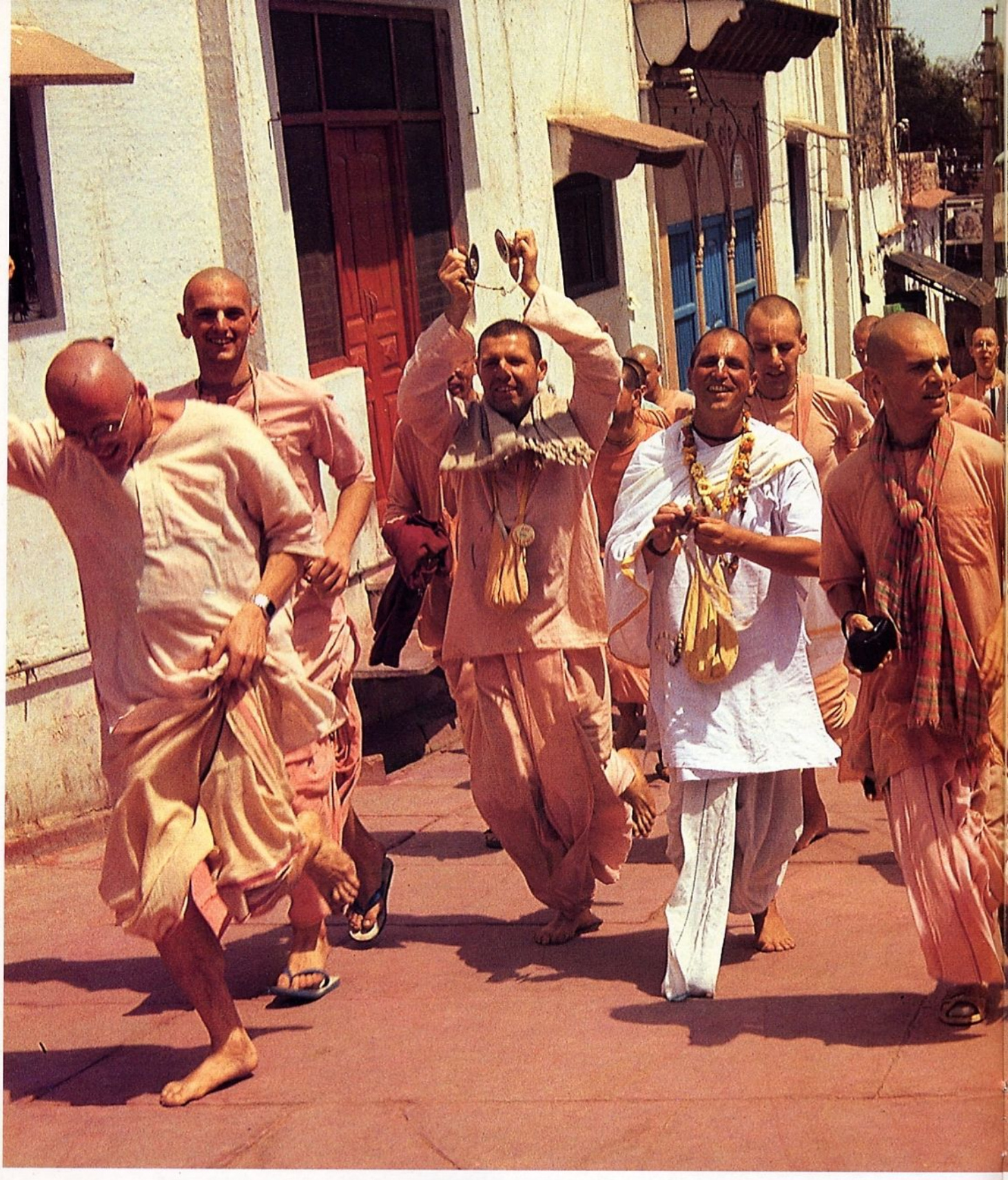
Bogota, Colombia—Calle 63A, #10-62, Chapinero/ Tel. 249-5797
Bogota, Colombia—Transversal 1a, #56-22, Alto Chapinero/ Tel. 255-8742
Buenos Aires, Argentina—Centro Bhaktivedanta, Andonaegui 2054, (1431)/ Tel. 515567
Cali, Colombia—Avenida 2 EN, #24N-39/ Tel. 68-88-53
Caracas, Venezuela—Prolongación Ave. Las Palmas, Calle Capriles, Quinta Pollita/ Tel 782-1939
Christ Church, Barbados—31 Goodland Park/ Tel. (809) 42-84209
Cochabamba, Bolivia—P.O. Box 3988/ Tel. 46441
Concepción, Chile—Nongüen, 588/ Tel. 23150
Córdoba, Argentina—Montevideo 950, Paso de los Andes/ Tel. (051) 262229
Crabwood Creek, Guyana—Grant 1803, Sec. D, Corentyne, Berbice
Essequibo Coast, Guyana—New Navadvipa Dham, Mainstay, Essequibo Coast
Georgetown, Guyana—24 Uitvlugt Front, West Coast Demerara
Guatemala, Guatemala—Apartado Postal 1534
Guayaquil, Ecuador—V.M. Rendón 1032 y 6 de Marzo (mail: P.O. Box 110-P)/ Tel. 302108, 348697
La Paz, Bolivia—Calle 16 Obrajes 460 (mail: P.O. Box 10278)/ Tel. 783556
Montevideo, Uruguay—Pablo de Maria 1427
Panama, Republic of Panama—Via las Cumbres, entrada Villa Zaita, frente a INPSA No. 10 (mail: P.O. Box 6-29-54, Panama)
Pereira, Colombia—Carrera 5a, #19-36
Rosario, Argentina—Centro Bhaktivedanta, Corrientes 925, Rosario 2000
Santa Cruz, Bolivia—P.O. Box 4920/ Tel. 40146 (31571)
San Jose, Costa Rica—Centro Cultural Govinda, 235 mtrs. norte del Banco Anglo, San Pedro (mail: Apdo. 166, 1002)/ Tel. 34-1218
San Salvador, El Salvador—Avenida Universitaria 1132, Media Quadra al sur de la Embajada Americana, San Salvador (mail: P.O. Box 1506)/ Tel. 25-96-17
Santiago, Chile—Carrera 330/ Tel. 698-8044
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic—Calle Cayetano Rodriquez No. 254
Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies—Prabhupada Ave., Longdenville, Chaguanas

FARM COMMUNITIES

Argentina (Bhaktilata Puri)—Casilla de Correo N° 77, 1727 Marcos Paz, Pcia. Bs.As., Republica Argentina
Colombia (Nueva Mathura)—Cruzero del Guali, Municipio de Caloto, Valle del Cauca/ Tel. 612688 en Cali
Guyana—Seawell Village, Corentyne, East Berbice
San Jose, Costa Rica—Granja Nueva Goloka Vrindavana, Carretera a Paraíso, de la entrada del Jardín Lancaster (por Calle Concava), 200 metros as sur (mano derecha) Cartago (mail: Apdo. 166, 1002)/ Tel. 51-6752
San Salvador, El Salvador—Carretera a Santa Ana, Km. 34, Canton Los Indios, Zapotitán, Dpto. de La Libertad

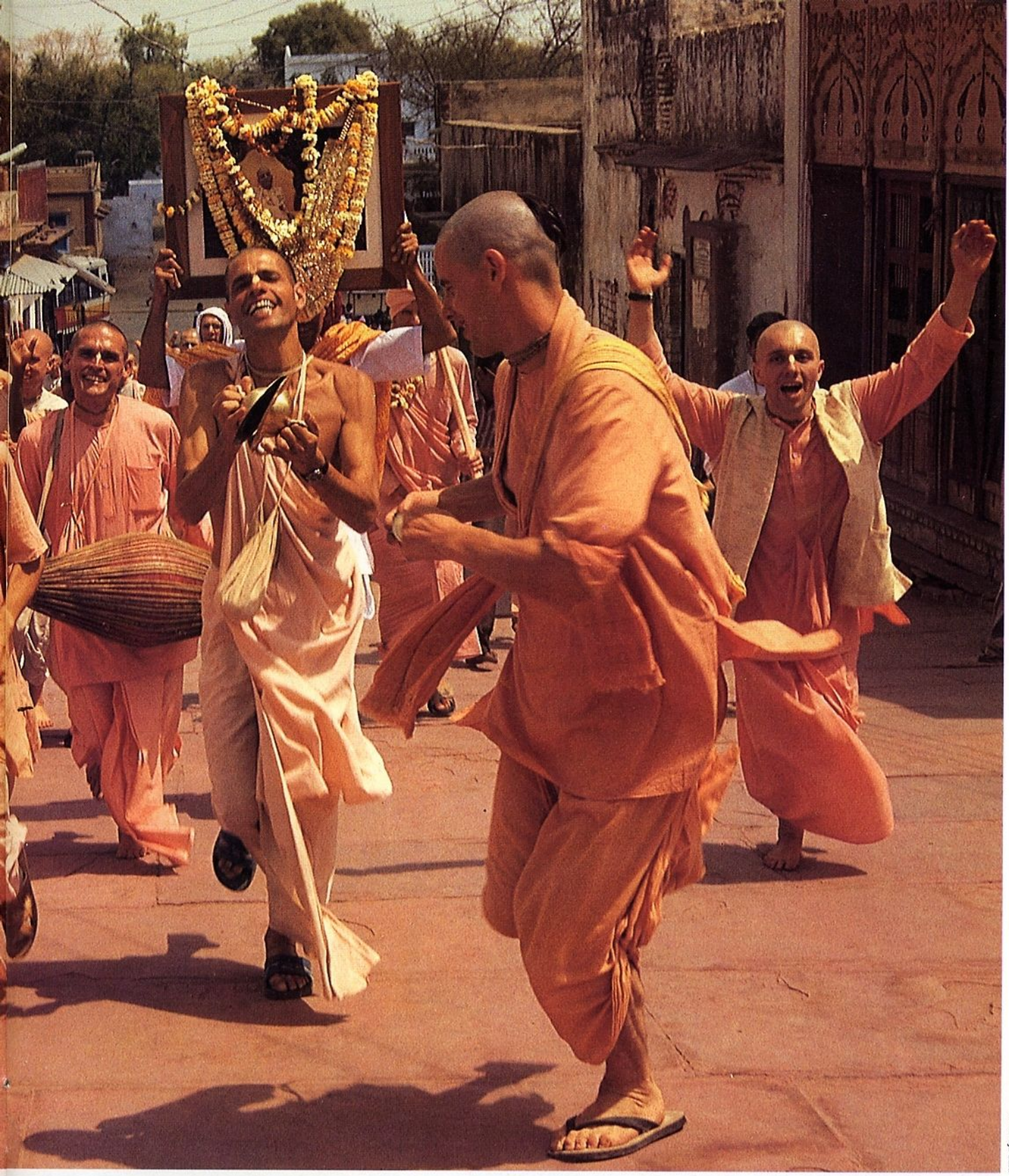
RESTAURANTS

Guatemala, Guatemala—Callejor Santandes a una cuadra abajo de Guatel, Panajachel Solola
La Paz, Bolivia—Restaurant Mañjari, Calle Potosí 1315, esq. Colón
San Salvador, El Salvador—25 Avenida Norte 1132
Santa Cruz, Bolivia—Snack Govinda, Av. Argomosa (1° anillo), esq. Bolivar



Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is a sound that is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. The sound Kṛṣṇa and the original Kṛṣṇa are the same. When we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and dance, Kṛṣṇa is also dancing with us. Of course we may say, "Well, I do not see Him," but why do we put so much stress on seeing? Why not hearing? Seeing,



Yamarāja dāsa

tasting, smelling, touching, and hearing are all instruments for gaining experience and knowledge. Why do we put such exclusive stress on seeing? A devotee does not wish to see Kṛṣṇa; he is satisfied by simply hearing of Kṛṣṇa. Seeing may eventually be there, but hearing should not be considered any less important.

There are things which we hear but do not see—the wind may be whistling past our ears, and we can hear it, but there is no possibility of seeing the wind. Since hearing is no less an important experience or valid one than seeing, we can hear Kṛṣṇa and realize His presence through sound. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself says, "I am not there in My abode, or in the heart of the meditating *yogī,* but where My pure devotees are singing My glories." We can feel the presence of Kṛṣṇa as we actually make progress.

—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Painting by Parīkṣit dāsa ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

VISION

(*continued from page 5*)

throughout the whole world are *ajānataḥ. Ajānataḥ* means that they do not know anything. They are proud, and they think that having some material advancement of life is perfection. No, that is not perfection. Perfection is *muktir . . . sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*—to be situated in one's own original position.

That can be done anywhere. *Bhakti-yoga* can be practiced in any part of the world, as we have experienced practically. What is *bhakti-yoga*? The first business is *śravaṇam:* you can hear. Hear about whom? Viṣṇu. Not nonsense talks. You must hear about Kṛṣṇa. You can hear anywhere. There is no specific mention that it can be heard in such and such place. You can hear anywhere. But in a holy place like Vṛndāvana, the hearing has a special effect.

So here we are establishing this temple, and you foreigners have taken some interest. I am very much pleased. So constantly come to the temple and hear about Kṛṣṇa. Make your *anarthas* vanquish.

Nowadays everything that is being done is *anartha,* without meaning. But if we say this, people will criticize us—"Why are you using motorcars? Why are you using airplanes?" But our tactic is that we can use any so-called *anartha* in the service of Kṛṣṇa. People have created some *anartha,* but we can engage even this *anartha* in the service of Kṛṣṇa and make it meaningful. That is our business.

So it requires time to clear the *anarthas.* We are encumbered with so many unnecessary things. By *bhakti-yoga* our so-called necessities of life will decrease. *Anarthopaśamam.* Although we are riding in motorcars, we don't think they are essential. But those who are captured by the present civilization, they think motorcars are essential. That is the difference.

Our process is that because we have to go to the United States to preach, why should we not take the airplane? Why should we waste our time? So we don't deprecate material advancement. But we simply warn that you don't forget Kṛṣṇa simply for the matter of material advancement. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We don't discourage you, but when you have invented something material, utilize it for Kṛṣṇa. Don't be attached to the motorcar. But utilize it for going fast for preaching work, that's all. This is required.

This is Rūpa Gosvāmī's advice. Don't die for want of a motorcar. But if you get the opportunity to go faster than walking, you should utilize it. This is required. Everything should be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. That is called *yukta-vairāgya.*

It is different from *phalgu-vairāgya,* which means to think that because something is material, therefore it is false and must be rejected. No. It has some relationship with Kṛṣṇa. That is to be seen.

What is this motorcar? Is it material? Where have they gotten this metal, iron, wood—everything? They have gotten it from Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it has a relationship with Kṛṣṇa. And when it is manufactured, use it for Kṛṣṇa. That is *yukta-vairāgya.* So we do not hate any products of material advancement. We can utilize everything for Kṛṣṇa's service. Our only preaching is "Don't forget Kṛṣṇa." That is our business. And if you have got a special talent, utilize it for Kṛṣṇa.

So if you take to *bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje,* the *anarthas,* the things that are not wanted, or the problems of the world, will be mitigated. People do not know this. Therefore we have to teach them. That is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Thank you very much.

EVERY HOME

(*continued from page 12*)

material activities, people throughout the world should take advantage of this movement and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* at home with their families. One should also refrain from sinful activities—illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling, and intoxication.

Kṛṣṇa in the Center

To begin one's path to perfection at home, one must simply recognize that God is the owner of the home. Thinking "my wife," "my husband," "my children," "my job, money, and career," or even "my breakfast" is a mistake.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in New York City in 1966, many young people came forward to move into the single ISKCON temple. Yet even then Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking about practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness at home:

> According to the Vedic system, a householder works for the satisfaction of God by establishing the Deity, or form of the Supreme Lord, either as a picture or a statue. In India there are many families still (including myself when I was a family man) who install the Deity of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in a room called "God's room." As a daily duty the family members rise early in the morning, open the door of God's room, offer the Lord some prayers and songs, and cleanse the room before beginning their daily affairs of taking breakfast and going to work.
>
> The point is that the proprietor of the house is the Supreme Lord, and all the family members are His workers or servants. When a man goes to his office or other place of work to earn the money necessary for running the household affairs, he may think, "Money is required lest God's service be stopped." So even when earning money a householder can be God conscious and situated in *yoga,* by working out of duty without attachment.
>
> And when he goes to the market, he can think, "Oh, this is a very nice thing; it can be offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa." Just as you may lovingly bring some fruits or flowers to a friend's house, you can think of bringing things for God. Our life should be so formed that in every activity there is such God consciousness.
>
> When the husband brings home the cooking ingredients and gives them to his wife, she thinks, "I am cooking this for Lord Kṛṣṇa," and she keeps the kitchen extra clean because it's for Kṛṣṇa's service. As she cooks she does not try to enjoy the preparation by tasting or even smelling it. The children are also trained not to think of eating anything unless it has been first offered to Kṛṣṇa. Of course, after the meal is cooked and offered, everyone may eat as much as he likes.
>
> Working and cooking will always go on anyway, but by learning the simple technique of doing things for the pleasure of the Lord, one's God consciousness will develop very nicely. And as one progresses in this mode of thinking, one can learn how to eat and sleep in order to keep one's body fit for the service of the Lord.
>
> A person may wonder if this is not the bodily platform of life. But no, it's the spiritual platform because one sees that the body belongs to Lord Kṛṣṇa. If we can understand this small technique and act upon it, we will be liberated and attain spiritual perfection.

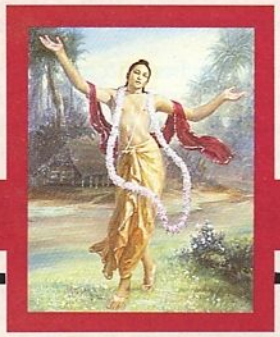
Thus, with a little guidance we can easily add Kṛṣṇa consciousness to our lives. We can begin serving Kṛṣṇa as the Deity in small ways, and later, should we choose, we can gradually introduce more features to our worship—we can offer incense and flowers, sing, play instruments, and dance. Everyone in the family can participate. It's great fun to worship Kṛṣṇa together, sing His glories, and hear about Him. And it's a potent reminder of life's ultimate goal. If we do this regularly, as the first business of our day, we will find that the influence of Kali-yuga stays outside our walls, and everything inside becomes most agreeable. Try it and see!

Friends

The *saṅkīrtana* movement is a social movement. Association with devotees is essential for our devotional service to Kṛṣṇa to properly develop and mature. We should therefore invite devotees to our homes. When one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples got married, he asked for some special instruction. Prabhupāda told him,

(*continued on page 24*)

Every Town And Village



The worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

Devotees Join in The Great American Meatout

Washington, D.C.—On March 20, ISKCON devotees all over the United States participated in the Great American Meatout, organized by the Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM) to inform the public of the benefits of vegetarianism. There were more than five hundred Meatout events across the U.S.

Here in the nation's capital, devotees distributed *prasādam* (sanctified food offered to Kṛṣṇa) in a downtown mall and catered a luncheon sponsored by vegetarian congressman Andrew Jacobs of Indiana and attended by two hundred congressmen and aides. The meal was cooked by Viśākhā-devī dāsī and Janeśvarī-devī dāsī. "The guests loved it," said Susan Smith, executive director of FARM, which hosted the luncheon. "Most of them asked for cookbooks."

In San Diego, devotees served twenty-three kinds of *prasādam* to three thousand people at the Meatout in Balboa Park. The KrishnaFest band chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa throughout the day. A representative of Animal Advocates said that the devotees' exhibit was the most important one there because it was the most informative.

In San Diego, an ISKCON exhibit on vegetarianism draws the attention of a Meatout participant.

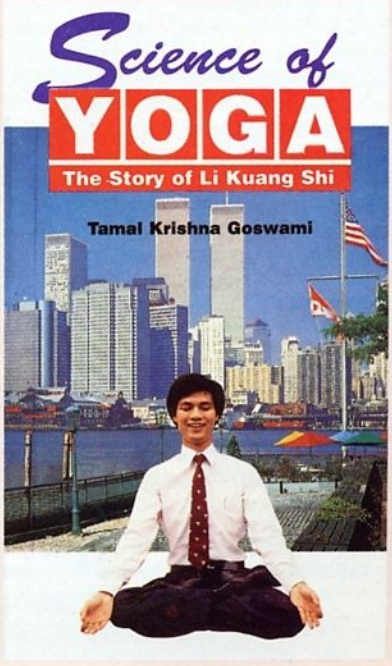
In Houston, devotees distributed two hundred free lunches of "meatless Texas chili" to office workers and homeless people in front of city hall. The event was reported on local radio and television. The devotees also distributed books and *prasādam* at the mayor's office.

In Dallas, Yudhiṣṭhira dāsa appeared on the city's most popular talk show and spoke to twenty thousand Texans about vegetarianism and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kalachandji's Restaurant, at the Dallas temple, hosted 250 visitors, who received more than a thousand books and magazines.

Novel Delivers Philosophy of *Gītā*

Dallas, Texas—The Hong Kong branch of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has published *Science of Yoga: The Story of Li Kuang Shi,* by Tamāl Krishna Goswami, a fictional novel about Chinese culture and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is Tamāl Krishna Goswami's fourth major book and one of the few novels ever written with themes on Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Story of Li Kuang Shi is set in New York City and reveals the dramatic contrast between the dogma of modern scientific thinking and the ageless spiritual knowledge of the Vedic literature. Li Kuang Shi, a Ph.D. candidate in biochemistry, was born in mainland China and is one of the select few to be granted full scholarship to New York's prestigious Columbia University. One day he encounters a devotee of



Kṛṣṇa, and what follows is a confrontation of atheism and religion, of mechanistic science and spirituality, which people of any religious persuasion will be moved by. In the light of the current turmoil in China, *The Story of Li Kuang Shi* is especially intriguing. The book is being translated into Chinese by Yaśomatīsūta dāsa of ISKCON Hong Kong. For purchasing information, write to Yudhiṣṭhira dāsa at ISKCON Dallas or call (214) 823-7264 or (214) 823-3078.

NEWS BRIEFS

Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā chariot rolled through downtown Aukland, New Zealand, as part of the annual Easter Show Opening Parade. Afterwards, Rāmāi Swami and his Transcendental Rock Band headed up a two-day program at Aotea Square, with *prasādam,* book distribution, face-painting, video booths, and a boutique.

•

ISKCON has lost the association of a valuable devotee, His Holiness Ācārya Swami, who died in a car crash in central Spain on May 15.

A disciple of Śrīpāda B. R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Ācārya Swami had been serving as a preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness outside ISKCON for many years . He joined ISKCON last March at the annual Māyāpur festival. Friendly, intelligent, learned, and devoted, he quickly became dear to the other ISKCON devotees.

Spanish by birth, he returned to Spain after the festival to help speed the work of the Spanish branch of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. He was killed less than two weeks later.

•

Lord Jagannātha rode in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Parade, held annually in Atlanta, Georgia. About half a million people who had gathered to honor the slain civil rights leader saw Lord Jagannātha on His chariot.

As the chariot rolled by the reviewing stand, the emcee announced to the crowd, "Our next entry is from the Atlanta Indian community and the Atlanta Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. The elaborately decorated wooden chariot celebrates the cultural unity of mankind. The Hare Kṛṣṇa belief is an ancient world religion which originated in India. The Hare Kṛṣṇas have been in America since 1965. That organization distributed food to millions of starving people in India, Africa, and of course to the homeless and needy in the United States. They have quarters close to my neighborhood. They're a good group."

•

For the third year in a row, the New Orleans Mardi Gras parade included Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā chariot. A decorated eighteen-wheel flat-bed truck carried an eight-foot-tall figure of Lord Jagannātha, smaller forms of Balarāma and Subhadrā, and forty devotees. *Karatālas, mṛdaṅgas,*

Festivals & Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at any Hare Kṛṣṇa center will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa
(August 18–September 29)

September 5—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā-devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

September 8—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

September 11—Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans, and fasting for the appearance of Lord Vāmanadeva.

September 12—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmanadeva. Feast at noon. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

September 13—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

September 14—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the foremost teacher of the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

September 15—Anniversary of the acceptance of *sannyāsa* by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

Month of Padmanābha
(September 16–October 15)

September 17—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States in 1965.

September 25—Indirā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 10—Rāmacandra-vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a great teacher of devotional service.

October 11—Pāśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 12—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

October 14—Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata. Offering lamps for one month. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *urad dāl*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradīya Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Dāmodara
(October 15–November 13)

October 19—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

October 25—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 29— Diwali (the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps). Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

October 30—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

bongos, an amplified keyboard, and exuberant chanting resounded from the float for the benefit of the crowd of 875,000.

•

The inauguration of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Padayātrā America was held in San Francisco on the last weekend in May. Mukunda Goswami, who opened the San Francisco temple in 1967, led the devotees on a tour of places connected with Śrīla Prabhupāda's activities. Rohiṇī Kumāra Swami performed the installation of the Padayātrā deities, Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The Padayātrā began with one hundred devotees walking through San Francisco carrying the

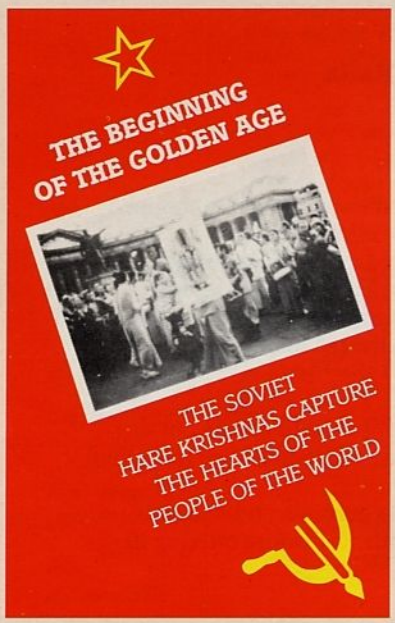
Padayātrā deities and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. After leaving San Francisco, the Padayātrā headed south to Tijuana, Mexico, where the devotees are scheduled to end their California walk in the first week of September.

Padayātrā America emphasizes preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, and holding festivals. Plans are being made to continue the walk across the United States and then throughout Europe.

RESOURCES

The books of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust are the most complete and authoritative English editions of the ancient Vedic writings available today. No literature in the world can compare with the Vedic writings in their presentation of the rigorous philosophy of the Absolute Truth and in their penetrating revelation of the glories of devotional service to the Supreme Lord. The beautiful volumes of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust describe in detail the subtle sciences of *karma*, reincarnation, *yoga*, meditation, and the ecstasy of pure devotion to God. For more information, write to one of the *Back to Godhead* offices listed on page 1.

The Beginning of the Golden Age, the success story of the Campaign to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas, is now available on videocassette. Narrated by Rod Young, television newsreader for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the documentary focuses on the efforts of a group of Hare Kṛṣṇa school-



children in Australia whose plea or for the release of imprisoned Soviet devotees sparked a powerful campaign in Australia. To order, send $19.95 (U.S. dollars) to ISKCON, P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly 4068, Q.L.D., Australia. [Note: In our July issue, the price was incorrectly listed as Australian dollars.]

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For more information, inquire at your local ISKCON center or get directly in touch with ISKCON Bombay.

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ISKCON Education. There are now two newsletters to help you keep up with education in ISKCON: *ISKCON Gurukula Newsletter* (practical information about teaching for schools, teachers, and parents; three or four issues a year), and *ISKCON Educational Journal* (a forum for exchange of ideas, opinions, and news about education and *varṇāśrama* in ISKCON; two or three issues a year). Subscribe to either or both: $5.00 each for four issues. Write to the ISKCON Board of Education, 3764 Watseka Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Have a computer and modem? Log on to the ISKCON Education BBS: (213) 837-9713. Daily: 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 A.M. Weekends: twenty-four hours.

Cooking with KŪRMA

Amogha dāsa

Based on the three-part videotape series *Cooking With Kūrma,* produced by ISKCON Television (ITV)*, this column features the gourmet recipes and authentic Indian techniques of ISKCON's famous Australian chef Kūrma dāsa.

Cucumber Raita

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 medium-size cucumber
1¼ cups plain yogurt
2 medium-size tomatoes cut into ½-inch cubes
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon *garam masālā*
1 teaspoon currants or raisins and slivered almonds

1. Dry roast the cumin seeds and crush.
2. Peel the cucumber, cut it in half lengthwise, and scrape out the seeds. Cut each piece in half lengthwise again and slice into small pieces.
3. Combine all the ingredients except the currants and almonds.
4. Sprinkle with the currants and almonds just before offering to Kṛṣṇa.

* For information about ITV, see "Resources" on page 23.

Puruṣārtha dāsa

EVERY HOME

(*continued from page 20*)

"Whenever you take *prasādam,* have guests." Inviting devotee guests helps Kṛṣṇa consciousness stay alive in the domestic world. The whole family can be busy preparing for their reception and entertainment. It's a Vedic tradition that a householder invite guests for the main meal of the day. If perchance no guests come, he may go into the street and call out, "If anyone is hungry, please come and dine with us!"

If we extend ourselves to others like this, we won't be disturbed by the "I, me, mine" syndrome of today's nuclear families, which tends to obliterate happy relationships and destroy the potential for spiritual perfection.

I once saw a couple of Chinese illustrations of heaven and hell. In heaven many people were sitting around, each with a bowl of rice and chopsticks, and they were happily feeding each other. In hell they just fed themselves.

Festivals

The devotees in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement follow a calendar that's full of festival days. Especially on major holy days, the home can be a flurry of activity, with everyone taking part in some way. Cleaning, cooking, decorating, preparing relevant Kṛṣṇa conscious pastimes or games with the children—the atmosphere can become surcharged with spiritual energy. One can either invite friends or go to their house. Everyone will be touched by a happy mood of cooperation. After all, who doesn't like festivals with good music, food, dance, song, dramas, stories, recitals, games, and loving friends to share it all?

By inviting guests for festivals, we will find our hearts becoming soft and large out of a giving spirit, and our relationships with our family members and friends will become smooth and pleasing. When we understand more clearly how our homes—with their cars, babies, and gardens—actually belong to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and how we are really guests in *His* house, we will feel a joyous, festive mood of Kṛṣṇa consciousness every moment of every day. Thus the fulfillment of Lord Caitanya's prediction—that the chanting of the holy names will be heard in every town and village—will bloom like a white lotus flower in our homes and in our hearts.

There are many other ways we can place Kṛṣṇa in the center of our lives and so live together in the absolute pleasure of remembrance of Him. If you like, you can get more information on these topics by visiting or writing to any Hare Kṛṣṇa temple.

Book Section

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the "cream of the Vedic literatures" of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Third Canto: "The Status Quo"

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Marriage of Kardama Muni and Devahūti

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *Emperor Svāyambhuva Manu encourages the sage Kardama Muni to accept Devahūti, Svāyambhuva's daughter, as his wife.*

TEXT 12

उद्यतस्य हि कामस्य प्रतिवादो न शस्यते ।
अपि निर्मुक्तसङ्गस्य कामरक्तस्य किं पुनः ॥१२॥

udyatasya hi kāmasya
prativādo na śasyate
api nirmukta-saṅgasya
kāma-raktasya kiṁ punaḥ

udyatasya—which has come of itself; *hi*—in fact; *kāmasya*—of material desire; *prativādaḥ*—the denial; *na*—not; *śasyate*—to be praised; *api*—even; *nirmukta*—of one who is free; *saṅgasya*—from attachment; *kāma*—to sensual pleasures; *raktasya*—of one addicted; *kim punaḥ*—how much less.

TRANSLATION

To deny an offering that has come of itself is not commendable even for one absolutely free from all attachment, much less one addicted to sensual pleasure.

PURPORT

In material life everyone is desirous of sense gratification; therefore, a person who gets an object of sense gratification without endeavor should not refuse to accept it. Kardama Muni was not meant for sense gratification, yet he aspired to marry and prayed to the Lord for a suitable wife. This was known to Svāyambhuva Manu. He indirectly convinced Kardama Muni: "You desire a suitable wife like my daughter, and she is now present before you. You should not reject the fulfillment of your prayer; you should accept my daughter."

TEXT 13

य उद्यतमनादृत्य कीनाशमभियाचते ।
क्षीयते तद्यशः स्फीतं मानश्चावज्ञया हतः ॥१३॥

ya udyatam anādṛtya
kīnāśam abhiyācate
kṣīyate tad-yaśaḥ sphītaṁ
mānaś cāvajñayā hataḥ

yaḥ—who; *udyatam*—an offering; *anādṛtya*—rejecting; *kīnāśam*—from a miser; *abhiyācate*—begs; *kṣīyate*—is lost; *tat*—his; *yaśaḥ*—reputation; *sphītam*—widespread; *mānaḥ*—honor; *ca*—and; *avajñayā*—by neglectful behavior; *hataḥ*—destroyed.

TRANSLATION

One who rejects an offering that comes of its own accord but later begs a boon from a miser thus loses his widespread reputation, and his pride is humbled by the neglectful behavior of others.

PURPORT

The general procedure of Vedic marriage is that a father offers his daughter to a suitable boy. That is a very respectable marriage. A boy should not go to the girl's father and ask for the hand of his daughter in marriage. That is considered to be humbling one's respectable position. Svāyambhuva Manu wanted to convince Kardama Muni, since he knew that the sage wanted to marry a suitable girl: "I am offering just such a suitable wife. Do not reject the offer, or else, because you are in need of a wife, you will have to ask for such a wife from someone else, who may not behave with you so well. In that case your position will be humbled."

Another feature of this incident is that Svāyambhuva Manu was the emperor, but he went to offer his qualified daughter to a poor *brāhmaṇa.* Kardama Muni had no worldly possessions—he was a hermit living in the forest—but he was advanced in culture. Therefore, in offering one's daughter to a person, the culture and quality are counted as prominent, not wealth or any other material consideration.

TEXT 14

अहं त्वाश्रृणवं विद्वन् विवाहार्थं समुद्यतम् ।
अतस्त्वमुपकुर्वाणः प्रत्तां प्रतिगृहाण मे ॥१४॥

ahaṁ tvāśṛṇavaṁ vidvan
vivāhārthaṁ samudyatam
atas tvam upakurvāṇaḥ
prattāṁ pratigṛhāṇa me

aham—I; *tvā*—you; *aśṛṇavam*—heard; *vidvan*—O wise man; *vivāha-artham*—for the sake of marriage; *samudyatam*—prepared; *ataḥ*—hence; *tvam*—you; *upakurvāṇaḥ*—not taken a vow of perpetual celibacy; *prattām*—offered; *pratigṛhāṇa*—please accept; *me*—of me.

TRANSLATION

Svāyambhuva Manu continued: O wise man, I heard that you were prepared to marry. Please accept her hand, which is being offered to you by me, since you have not taken a vow of perpetual celibacy.

PURPORT

The principle of *brahmacarya* is celibacy. There are two kinds of *brahmacārīs.* One is called *naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī,* which means one who takes a vow of celibacy for his whole life, whereas the other, the *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī,* is a *brahmacārī* who takes the vow of celibacy up to a certain age. For example, he may take the vow to remain celibate up to twenty-five years of age; then, with the permission of his spiritual master, he enters married life. *Brahmacarya* is student life, the beginning of life in the spiritual orders, and the principle of *brahmacarya* is celibacy. Only a householder can indulge in sense gratification or sex life, not a *brahmacārī.* Svāyambhuva Manu requested Kardama Muni to accept his daughter, since Kardama had not taken the vow of *naiṣṭhika-brahmacarya.* He was willing to marry, and the suitable daughter of a high royal family was presented.

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TEXT 15

ऋषिरुवाच
बाढमुद्वोढुकामोऽहमप्रत्ता च तवात्मजा ।
आवयोरनुरूपोऽसावाद्यो वैवाहिको विधिः ॥१५॥

ṛṣir uvāca
bāḍham udvoḍhu-kāmo 'ham
aprattā ca tavātmajā
āvayor anurūpo 'sāv
ādyo vaivāhiko vidhiḥ

ṛṣiḥ—the great sage Kardama; *uvāca*—said; *bāḍham*—very well; *udvoḍhu-kāmaḥ*—desirous to marry; *aham*—I; *aprattā*—not promised to anyone else; *ca*—and; *tava*—your; *ātma-jā*—daughter; *āvayoḥ*—of us two; *anurūpaḥ*—proper; *asau*—this; *ādyaḥ*—first; *vaivāhikaḥ*—of marriage; *vidhiḥ*—ritualistic ceremony.

TRANSLATION

The great sage replied: Certainly I have a desire to marry, and your daughter has not yet married or given her word to anyone. Therefore our marriage according to the Vedic system can take place.

PURPORT

There were many considerations by Kardama Muni before accepting the daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu. Most important is that Devahūti had first of all fixed her mind on marrying him. She did not choose to have any other man as her husband. That is a great consideration because female psychology dictates that when a woman offers her heart to a man for the first time, it is very difficult for her to take it back. Also, she had not married before; she was a virgin girl. All these considerations convinced Kardama Muni to accept her. Therefore he said, "Yes, I shall accept your daughter under religious regulations of marriage." There are different kinds of marriages, of which the first-class marriage is held by inviting a suitable bridegroom for the daughter and giving her in charity, well dressed and well decorated with ornaments, along with a dowry according to the means of the father. There are other kinds of marriage, such as *gāndharva* marriage and marriage by love, which are also accepted as marriage. Even if one is forcibly kidnapped and later on accepted as a wife, that is also accepted. But Kardama Muni accepted the first-class way of marriage because the father was willing and the daughter was qualified. She had never offered her heart to anyone else. All these considerations made Kardama Muni agree to accept the daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu.

TEXT 16

कामः स भूयान्नरदेव तेऽस्याः
पुत्र्याः समाम्नायविधौ प्रतीतः ।
क एव ते तनयां नाद्रियेत
स्वयैव कान्त्या क्षिपतीमिव श्रियम् ॥१६॥

kāmaḥ sa bhūyān naradeva te 'syāḥ
putryāḥ samāmnāya-vidhau pratītaḥ
ka eva te tanayāṁ nādriyeta
svayaiva kāntyā kṣipatīm iva śriyam

kāmaḥ—desire; *saḥ*—that; *bhūyāt*—let it be fulfilled; *nara-deva*—O King; *te*—your; *asyāḥ*—this; *putryāḥ*—of the daughter; *samāmnāya-vidhau*—in the process of the Vedic scriptures; *pratītaḥ*—recognized; *kaḥ*—who; *eva*—in fact; *te*—your; *tanayām*—daughter; *na ādriyeta*—would not adore; *svayā*—by her own; *eva*—alone; *kāntyā*—bodily luster; *kṣipatīm*—excelling; *iva*—as if; *śriyam*—ornaments.

TRANSLATION

Let your daughter's desire for marriage, which is recognized in the Vedic scriptures, be fulfilled. Who would not accept her hand? She is so beautiful that by her bodily luster alone she excels the beauty of her ornaments.

PURPORT

Kardama Muni wanted to marry Devahūti in the recognized manner of marriage prescribed in the scriptures. As stated in the Vedic scriptures, the first-class process is to call the bridegroom to the home of the bride and hand her to him in charity with a dowry of necessary ornaments, gold, furniture and other household paraphernalia. This form of marriage is prevalent among higher-class Hindus even today and is declared in the *śāstras* to confer great religious merit on the bride's father. To give a daughter in charity to a suitable son-in-law is considered to be one of the pious activities of a householder. There are eight forms of marriage mentioned in the scripture *Manu-smṛti*, but only one process of marriage, *brāhma* or *rājasika* marriage, is now current. Other kinds of marriage—by love, by exchange of garlands or by kidnapping the bride—are now forbidden in this Kali age. Formerly, *kṣatriyas* would, at their pleasure, kidnap a princess from another royal house, and there would be a fight between the *kṣatriya* and the girl's family; then, if the kidnapper was the winner, the girl would be offered to him for marriage. Even Kṛṣṇa married Rukmiṇī by that process, and some of His sons and grandsons also married by kidnapping. Kṛṣṇa's grandsons kidnapped Duryodhana's daughter, which caused a fight between the Kuru and Yadu families. Afterward, an adjustment was made by the elderly members of the Kuru family. Such marriages were current in bygone ages, but at the present moment they are impossible because the strict principles of *kṣatriya* life have practically been abolished. Since India has become dependent on foreign countries, the particular influences of her social orders have been lost; now, according to the scriptures, everyone is a *śūdra*. The so-called *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* have forgotten their traditional activities, and in the absence of these activities they are called *śūdras*. It is said in the scriptures, *kalau śūdra-sambhavaḥ*. In the age of Kali everyone will be like *śūdras*. The traditional social customs are not followed in this age, although formerly they were followed strictly.

TEXT 17

यां हर्म्यपृष्ठे क्वणदङ्घ्रिशोभां
विक्रीडतीं कन्दुकविह्वलाक्षीम् ।
विश्वावसुर्न्यपतत्स्वाद्विमाना-
द्विलोक्य सम्मोहविमूढचेताः ॥१७॥

yāṁ harmya-pṛṣṭhe kvaṇad-aṅghri-śobhāṁ
vikrīḍatīṁ kanduka-vihvalākṣīm
viśvāvasur nyapatat svād vimānād
vilokya sammoha-vimūḍha-cetāḥ

yām—whom; *harmya-pṛṣṭhe*—on the roof of the palace; *kvaṇat-aṅghri-śobhām*—whose beauty was heightened by the tinkling ornaments on her feet; *vikrīḍatīm*—playing; *kanduka-vihvala-akṣīm*—with eyes bewildered, following her ball; *viśvāvasuḥ*—Viśvāvasu; *nyapatat*—fell down; *svāt*—from his own; *vimānāt*—from the airplane; *vilokya*—seeing; *sammoha-vimūḍha-cetāḥ*—whose mind was stupefied.

TRANSLATION

I have heard that Viśvāvasu, the great Gandharva, his mind stupefied with infatuation, fell from his airplane after seeing your daughter playing with a ball on the roof of the palace, for she was indeed beautiful with her tinkling ankle bells and her eyes moving to and fro.

PURPORT

It is understood that not only at the present moment but in those days also there were skyscrapers. Herein we find the word *harmya-pṛṣṭhe*. *Harmya* means "a very big palatial building." *Svād vimānāt* means "from his own airplane." It is suggested that private airplanes or helicopters were also current in those days. The Gandharva Viśvāvasu, while flying in the sky, could see Devahūti playing ball on the roof of the palace. Ball playing was also current, but aristocratic girls would not play in a public place. Ball playing and other such pleasures were not meant for ordinary women and girls; only princesses like Devahūti could indulge in such sports. It is described here that she was seen from the flying airplane. This indicates that the palace was very high, otherwise how could one see her from an airplane? The vision was so distinct that the Gandharva Viśvāvasu was bewildered by her beauty and by hearing the sound of her ankle bangles, and being captivated by the sound and beauty, he fell down. Kardama Muni mentioned the incident as he had heard it.

TEXT 18

तां प्रार्थयन्तीं ललनाललाम-
मसेवितश्रीचरणैरदृष्टाम् ।
वत्सां मनोरुच्चपदः स्वसारं
को नानुमन्येत बुधोऽभियाताम् ॥१८॥

tāṁ prārthayantīṁ lalanā-lalāmam
asevita-śrī-caraṇair adṛṣṭām
vatsāṁ manor uccapadaḥ svasāraṁ
ko nānumanyeta budho 'bhiyātām

tām—her; *prārthayantīm*—seeking; *lalanā-lalāmam*—the ornament of women; *asevita-śrī-caraṇaiḥ*—by those who have not worshiped the feet of Lakṣmī; *adṛṣṭām*—not seen; *vatsām*—beloved daughter; *manoḥ*—of Svāyambhuva Manu; *uccapadaḥ*—of Uttānapāda; *svasāram*—sister; *kaḥ*—what; *na anumanyeta*—would not welcome; *budhaḥ*—wise man; *abhiyātām*—who has come of her own accord.

TRANSLATION

What wise man would not welcome her, the very ornament of womanhood, the beloved daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu and sister of Uttānapāda? Those who have not worshiped the gracious feet of the goddess of fortune cannot even perceive her, yet she has come of her own accord to seek my hand.

PURPORT

Kardama Muni praised the beauty and qualification of Devahūti in different ways. Devahūti was actually the ornament of all ornamented beautiful girls. A girl becomes beautiful by putting ornaments on her body, but Devahūti was more beautiful than the ornaments; she was considered the ornament of the ornamented beautiful girls. Demigods and Gandharvas were attracted by her beauty. Kardama Muni, although a great sage, was not a denizen of the heavenly planets, but it is mentioned in the previous verse that Viśvāvasu, who came from heaven, was also attracted by the beauty of Devahūti. Besides her personal beauty, she was the daughter of Emperor Svāyambhuva and sister of King Uttānapāda. Who could refuse the hand of such a girl?

TEXT 19

अतो भजिष्ये समयेन साध्वीं
यावत्तेजो बिभृयादात्मनो मे ।
अतो धर्मान् पारमहंस्यमुख्यान्
शुक्लप्रोक्तान् बहु मन्येऽविहिंस्रान् ॥१९॥

ato bhajiṣye samayena sādhvīṁ
yāvat tejo bibhṛyād ātmano me
ato dharmān pāramahaṁsya-mukhyān
śukla-proktān bahu manye 'vihiṁsrān

ataḥ—therefore; *bhajiṣye*—I shall accept; *samayena*—on the conditions; *sādhvīm*—the chaste girl; *yāvat*—until; *tejaḥ*—semen; *bibhṛyāt*—may bear; *ātmanaḥ*—from my body; *me*—my; *ataḥ*—thereafter; *dharmān*—the duties; *pāramahaṁsya-mukhyān*—of the best of the *paramahaṁsas; śukla-proktān*—spoken by Lord Viṣṇu; *bahu*—much; *manye*—I shall consider; *avihiṁsrān*—free from envy.

TRANSLATION

Therefore I shall accept this chaste girl as my wife, on the condition that after she bears semen from my body, I shall accept the life of devotional service accepted by the most perfect human beings. That process was described by Lord Viṣṇu. It is free from envy.

PURPORT

Kardama Muni expressed his desire for a very beautiful wife to Emperor Svāyambhuva and accepted the Emperor's daughter for marriage. Kardama Muni was in the hermitage practicing complete celibacy as a *brahmacārī*, and although he had the desire to marry, he did not want to be a householder for the whole span of his life because he was conversant with the Vedic principles of human life. According to Vedic principles, the first part of life should be utilized in *brahmacarya* for the development of character and spiritual qualities. In the next part of life, one may accept a wife and beget children, but one should not beget children like cats and dogs.

Kardama Muni desired to beget a child who would be a ray of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should beget a child who can perform the duties of Viṣṇu, otherwise there is no need to produce children. There are two kinds of children born of good fathers: one is educated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that he can be delivered from the clutches of *māyā* in that very life, and the other is a ray of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and teaches the world the ultimate goal of life. As will be described in later chapters, Kardama Muni begot such a child—Kapila, the incarnation of the Personality of Godhead who enunciated the philosophy of Sāṅkhya. Great householders pray to God to send His representative so that there may be an auspicious movement in human society. This is one reason to beget a child. Another reason is that a highly enlightened parent can train a child in Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that the child will not have to come back again to this miserable world. Parents should see to it that the child born of them does not enter the womb of a mother again. Unless one can train a child for liberation in that life, there is no need to marry or produce children. If human society produces children like cats and dogs for the disturbance of social order, then the world becomes hellish, as it has in this age of Kali. In this age, neither parents nor their children are trained; both are animalistic and simply eat, sleep, mate, defend, and gratify their senses. This disorder in social life cannot bring peace to human society. Kardama Muni explains beforehand that he would not associate with the girl Devahūti for the whole duration of his life. He would simply associate with her until she had a child. In other words, sex life should be utilized only to produce a nice child, not for any other purpose. Human life is especially meant for complete devotion to the service of the Lord. That is the philosophy of Lord Caitanya.

After fulfilling his responsibility to produce a nice child, one should take *sannyāsa* and engage in the perfectional *paramahaṁsa* stage. *Paramahaṁsa* refers to the most highly elevated perfectional stage of life. There are four stages within *sannyāsa* life, and *paramahaṁsa* is the highest order. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is called the *paramahaṁsa-saṁhitā*, the treatise for the highest class of human beings. The *paramahaṁsa* is free from envy. In other stages, even in the householder stage of life, there is competition and envy, but since the activities of the human being in the *paramahaṁsa* stage are completely engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or devotional service, there is no scope for envy. In the same order as Kardama Muni, about one hundred years ago, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda also wanted to beget a child who could preach the philosophy and teachings of Lord Caitanya to the fullest extent. By his prayers to the Lord he had as his child Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who at the present moment is preaching the philosophy of Lord Caitanya throughout the entire world through his bona fide disciples.

TEXT 20

यतोऽभवद्विश्वमिदं विचित्रं
संस्थास्यते यत्र च वावतिष्ठते ।
प्रजापतीनां पतिरेष मह्यं
परं प्रमाणं भगवाननन्तः ॥२०॥

yato 'bhavad viśvam idaṁ vicitraṁ
saṁsthāsyate yatra ca vāvatiṣṭhate
prajāpatīnāṁ patir eṣa mahyaṁ
paraṁ pramāṇaṁ bhagavān anantaḥ

yataḥ—from whom; *abhavat*—emanated; *viśvam*—creation; *idam*—this; *vicitram*—wonderful; *saṁsthāsyate*—will dissolve; *yatra*—in whom; *ca*—and; *vā*—or; *avatiṣṭhate*—presently exists; *prajā-patīnām*—of the Prajāpatis; *patiḥ*—the Lord; *eṣaḥ*—this; *mahyam*—to me; *param*—highest; *pramāṇam*—authority; *bhagavān*—Supreme Lord; *anantaḥ*—unlimited.

TRANSLATION

The highest authority for me is the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead, from whom this wonderful creation emanates and in whom its sustenance and dissolution rest. He is the origin of all Prajāpatis, the personalities meant to produce living entities in this world.

(*continued in next issue*)

CORNERSTONES

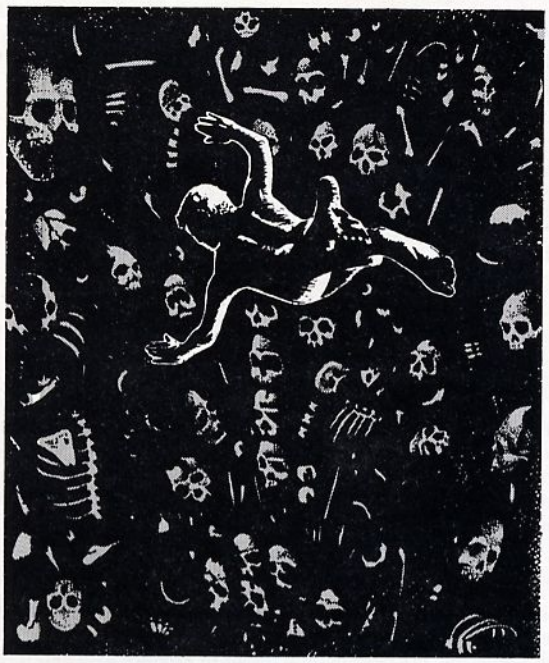
by Gaura Gadādhara dāsa

1. The Body

i.
I have seen
the wax cheek,
the void eye,
the unbendable back;
I have seen them,
unprotesting,
on the pyre.

ii.
The lens, the retina,
the screen in the brain;
they don't experience seeing
any more than lachrymal glands
lament.

The cerebrum, the cerebellum
and the medulla oblongata
don't confer, ponder or philosophize
any more than the liver,
the pancreas and the intestines
sit down to enjoy a good meal.



DRAWINGS BY JAGANNĀTHA-KṚṢṆA DĀSA

iii.
I am not
collarbones or shoulder blades
or vertebrae or ribs.

And that meaningless skeletal grin
which will be mine
won't be me.

2. The World

i.
Last night, in a garden, I saw
two skeletons
lying on top of the grass,
dressed in flesh,
trying to embrace.

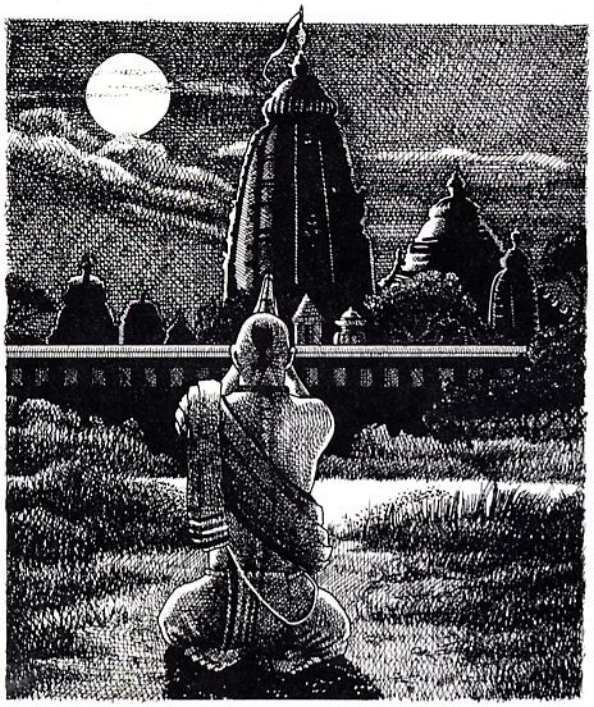
In a city I saw
a million skeletons-in-skin
scurrying over streets
paved with gravestones—
they were grasping at objects,
and things were falling from their hands.

ii.
I saw a soul
stumbling through centuries
of identities;
behind it
a trail of skeletons—
some with fins, some with wings,
some with two legs, some with four.

3. The Lord

i.
The reductionist's cosmos
of random chemical bonding,
of chaos and coincidence,
is so gross and heavy-handed.

How—
before the breath-taking, unearthly complexity,
before the staggering, supernatural co-ordination,
before the dizzying, ineffable beauty—
how can a scientist
not fall down, dumb-struck, awe-struck,
speechless, unable to pray?



ii.
O my Lord,
every point in space
emits the soothing aroma
of Your immanence—
the light, the leaves,
my very looking, my thoughts themselves—
is billowing forth
a divine, intoxicating ether,
a sweet storm of proofs-beyond-logic
of Your genius beyond comprehension,
of Your artistry beyond imagination,
of Your presence beyond dull senses,
and of Your brilliant existence
beyond any shadow of a doubt.

iii.
Thank You, my Lord,
for piling up coincidences
to improbability,
and then to impossibility—
for showing me
so many miracles of intervention.

I am stunned realizing
Your proximity,
Your factuality,
and the inconceivability
of Your personal concern.

4. Bhakti

i.
Spirit is solid,
but matter is insubstantial—
for us
this is unreality.

Our backs to God,
we pursue the intangible
through death after death—
ever empty-handed.

ii.
Although bound to this dimension
by our thick-skulled determination
to dominate,
if we try to break
with this self-aggrandizement
and turn,
fully embarrassed,
towards the grandeur of God—
by His grace
we can escape.

iii.
This is the work of the human form—
to re-make the mind—
to cut it off from matter
and fix it on God.

This is *bhakti-yoga*—
every act, every word, every thought
for God—
it's hard,
it's a process,
it takes time.

iv.
The beginning is to contemplate
how one has lusted
for so long
over nothing;
how one was countless arrogant fools;
how one's list of lives
is a list of insults . . .
humility is a tangible prayer.

TURNING TO THE BEAUTY OF KṚṢṆA

The beauty found in this relative world
pales before the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's perfect form.

by AJITĀNANDA DĀSA

People are very much enamored by the beauty of this world. The Vedic literature, however, offers us penetrating insight into the actual nature of material beauty. If people would take the time to hear from these revered sources, they would be surprised to learn that what is accepted as beauty within this world is but the pale, illusory reflection of the unlimited spiritual beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Of course, some would disagree with the idea that material beauty is false. The smitten young man sees his sweetheart as the epitome of loveliness, the scholar is moved by the rich imagery in a masterpiece of poetry, and the artist views the pastoral scenery as the handiwork of angels. In each case the viewer appreciates what he or she perceives to be true beauty. Why, then, is it said to be false?

The answer to this question is given in the Second Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā,* where Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the nonexistent there is no endurance and of the existent there is no cessation. This seers have concluded by studying the nature of both."

Material beauty is herein deemed false in the sense that its manifestation is very, very brief. It appears momentarily and then disappears like a mirage. The attractive young body becomes old and wrinkled; it dies,

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decays, and is eaten by worms. And the beauty of the poem, although preserved for some time in book form, must also perish, as must the flowered countryside, lost forever in the dark wells of time.

Material beauty also proves false when we look more closely or shift our perspective. If the young man, for instance, were to peel away the covering layer of skin on the alluring young body—the object of his attraction—he would immediately become repulsed, proving conclusively that material beauty is only skin deep. And the poem or country scene, appreciated at one moment as quintessential beauty, may be seen in the next as utterly devoid of all charm by the same admirer, who, having endured some emotional trauma, now sees everything much differently.

Finally, material beauty is false in that it can never fully satisfy the soul, and in time the young man desires another lover, the scholar purchases a new book of poems, and the artist goes on to view another scene, each searching for an absolute level of fulfillment that continually eludes him, even up to death.

All of these points are mentioned not to invoke a mood of gloom and despair but rather to illustrate that although our love of beauty is a perfectly natural sentiment, we are looking for it in all the wrong quarters. As a miner carefully studies his maps before prospecting, we also must determine the whereabouts of true beauty if we wish to unearth this valuable treasure.

The Vedic literature tells us that the reservoir of beauty is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the Absolute Truth, or the source of everything. The relative beauty found in this world has its origin in Him, and ultimately we must turn to Him if we wish to realize our desire to know perfect beauty. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā,* Lord Brahmā eloquently describes the transcendental beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa:

> I worship Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, whose blooming eyes are like lotus petals, whose head is bedecked with a peacock's feather, whose figure of beauty is tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness is charming millions of Cupids.

This factual description of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual beauty is not a whimsical creation of Brahmā's imagination. Rather, it was spoken by Brahmā in a trance of self-realization, in which he saw the Lord standing before him face to face. In his next verse, Brahmā continues to describe his vision, with notable reference to the eternality of Kṛṣṇa's form:

> I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, round whose neck is swinging a garland of jeweled ornaments, who is always reveling in pastimes of love, whose graceful, threefold-bending form of Śyāmasundara is eternally manifest.

As Kṛṣṇa's form is "eternally manifest," so is the beauty of that form, thus fulfilling the *Bhagavad-gītā's* definition of reality—that which has "no cessation." Not only is Kṛṣṇa's beauty eternal, but it is also ever fresh, like an endlessly blooming springtime. A devotee never tires of viewing that divine form, which is so magnificent that Kṛṣṇa Himself cannot estimate it, for in one moment He measures, and in the next moment it expands unlimitedly, eluding even His vast capacity to understand.

Since Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth, His beauty is also absolute and is never canceled or diminished by closer examination or change in perspective. His form is the vessel of pure spiritual energy—eternity, knowledge, and bliss—and it is therefore beautiful through and through. Indeed it has been compared to the radiant *vaidūrya* gem, which, although appearing differently according to the play of light upon its numerous colored facets, is extraordinarily beautiful from whichever angle it is viewed. Thus Kṛṣṇa's beauty is always appreciated by the countless pure devotees who inhabit the spiritual sky, some of whom regularly descend to this material plane to turn our attention back to Him.

Kṛṣṇa's beauty is always appreciated by the countless pure devotees who inhabit the spiritual sky, some of whom regularly descend to this material plane to turn our attention back to Him.

Kṛṣṇa's absolute nature is also such that anything connected with Him, be it His name, form, words, pastimes, or paraphernalia, also exhibits His superlative beauty. In Śrīla Prabhupāda's book *Kṛṣṇa,* this remarkable feature of Kṛṣṇa's personality is apparent in the following statement by a devotee, in which the beauty of the Lord's flute-playing is feelingly described:

> My dear friends, Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that the goddess of fortune always remains on His chest, and He is always adorned with a golden necklace. Beautiful Kṛṣṇa plays His flute in order to enliven the hearts of many devotees. He is the only friend of the suffering living entities. When He plays His flute, all the cows and other animals of Vṛndāvana, although engaged in eating, simply take a morsel of food in their mouths and stop chewing. Their ears raise up and they become stunned. They do not appear alive but like painted animals. Kṛṣṇa's flute-playing is so attractive that even the animals become enchanted, and what to speak of ourselves.

All of these features combine to make Kṛṣṇa's beauty fully satisfying. While material beauty offers momentary pleasure to the senses, Kṛṣṇa's spiritual beauty touches the very soul of the living being, thrilling him with a pleasure so wonderful that, once having relished it, he can never give it up. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has therefore advised,

> My dear friend, if you still have any desire to enjoy the company of your friends within this material world, then don't look upon the form of Kṛṣṇa, who is standing on the bank of Keśī-ghāṭa. He is known as Govinda, and His eyes are very enchanting. He is playing upon His flute, and on His head there is a peacock feather. His whole body is illuminated by the moonlight in the sky.

The more a devotee appreciates Kṛṣṇa's beauty, the less he falls for the flickering attractions of this material world. Once, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of the Lord, was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa alone, absorbed in the beauty of the Lord's holy name. An alluring young prostitute appeared and tried to divert him from his vow of chanting Kṛṣṇa's names 300,000 times daily. Haridāsa's attraction to Kṛṣṇa's beauty was so deep, however, that he remained unaffected by her advances. Instead, he converted the prostitute into a virtuous devotee greatly attached to the beauty of Kṛṣṇa.

Although descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's beauty are fascinating, we may rightfully wonder how we can overcome our own attraction to the world's enticements and achieve the coveted vision of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual beauty. We can begin by remembering that even the flickering beauty of this world has its origin in Kṛṣṇa. The sunrise, the fragrant flower, the taste of water, or anything else of value can remind us of Kṛṣṇa and thus act as an agent for our spiritual enlightenment.

Furthermore, by hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa in the company of devotees and by worshiping His Deity form in the temple, we can accelerate our spiritual advancement. This combination of pleasurable devotional activities will very surely and effectively raise us to the platform of pure love for Kṛṣṇa, enabling us to view Him face to face and enjoy the nectar of His moonlike beauty.

Roundup at Olduvai

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

As the helicopter descended through the dawn light near Olduvai Gorge, Eleanor Doting checked her seatbelt. Had her son Vincent arrived safely? He had insisted on parachuting in the day before to have extra time alone with Rocky, his younger brother.

Why did Vincent always have to jump into things? At age ten he campaigned at school for JFK, even though she explained to Vincent a hundred times that his classmates couldn't vote. At eighteen he left college to join some hippies in California, and a couple of years later he wrote to say he was living at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Paris.

Paris no less! Within minutes she had booked a flight, and within days they were sitting together on a park bench near the Eiffel Tower, where she'd caught up with him chanting and dancing with his shaven-headed friends.

"Vincent, come home. You can have anything you want. I'll even give you

ILLUSTRATION BY JAGANNĀTHA-KṚṢṆA DĀSA

money for marijuana. I'll . . ."

"But Mom, I never smoked . . ."

"Sure you didn't, deary. Why not come back with me? I have a plane ticket for you."

"But Mom, you can see me here all you want. And I'll visit you next Christmas, promise."

"Now Vincent . . ."

" 'Viṣṇu dāsa,' Mom. I have a new name."

Viṣṇu dāsa indeed! Well, he had in fact come to visit that Christmas, and every year after that, too. She freely admitted that he (still Vincent to her) had a better head than Rocky, who had taken *forever* to finish grad school, only to join the Peace Corps in Africa, for heaven's sake. Rocky later returned to New York and made decent money designing software. But the boy never shaped up, always wore old jeans and flannel shirts, kept a long beard, and drank too much. And now, for the love of Pete, he was back in Africa—"looking for his roots"!

So this time she had booked a flight to Dar-es-Salaam instead of Paris, she was chasing Rocky instead of Vincent, and she'd had to rent a helicopter to boot. If Harry Doting were alive to see what she was doing with his hard-earned money...

This time she had asked for Vincent's help, which was also a first. She'd had to, because Rocky now had some crazy idea about staying forever in Africa, and she knew Vincent was a good talker, with a more sober, logical head since joining Hare Kṛṣṇa. She *should* know. Didn't she patiently listen to him "preaching" to her for hours every Christmas?

After resting through the heat of the day, Mrs. Doting mounted something resembling a mule and, with her guide, found Rocky's camp near the bottom of the gorge early that evening. She heard voices coming from a lamplit tent.

"It's all guesswork," Vincent was saying. "They dig up a few places, a tiny fraction of the earth's surface, and they figure they can tell us what happened here millions and billions of years ago."

"Why not?" Rocky replied. "Geologists call it 'the stratigraphic column.' It's the layers of rock that have been piled up since the very beginning."

"But look," said Vincent. "Most scientists accept only the stratigraphic evidence that supports their theories. They ignore findings that indicate modern man existed millions of years ago. Still other scientists say that since ninety percent of the sedimentary layers may have eroded away, the stratigraphic column is a useless tool."

"But *you* look," said Rocky. "Right here on page twenty-eight of my book . . ."

Mrs. Doting could contain herself no longer. "That's the trouble with you," she shouted, bursting through the tent flap. "Ever since you dug that silly old textbook out of the attic, you've been saying you could find your roots—your 'lost ancestors,' for goodness sake—in some jungle."

Recovering from the surprise entrance, the boys offered their mother a seat.

"It *is* our roots," Rocky insisted, "our origins . . ."

"But you can't know for certain what happened even a thousand years ago," said Vincent, "what to speak of a million or a billion, by digging the ground. It's a hoax. Your own book says that the science of geology didn't produce a coherent model of earth's history until after 1960. So in less than thirty years you and a few geologists have mapped out millions of centuries? I wouldn't swallow it even if you'd been working ten times that long."

"It's that silly book and a few others he's been reading," Mrs. Doting chided from her perch on a camp cot.

"Well, in all fairness," said Vincent, tapping his *Bhagavad-gītā*, "I too have a book that talks of remote origins. Here in the Fourth Chapter you can read that the *Gītā* and highly intelligent followers of the *Gītā* have been around for at least 120 million years. Look, here's how it's calculated."

Rocky wouldn't look. "That's your religion," he scoffed. "You just believe whatever your religion tells you. That's blind faith."

"And you don't have blind faith that a handful of men have pieced together a believable history of the earth in just a few years from a few rocks? The difference is that the *Gītā* isn't guesswork. It's been handed down unchanged for millions of years. Your holy geologists change every day to account for their so-called evidence. Does the truth change every day, or does it stay the same eternally?"

"Well, I don't know if Rocky will *ever* change," said Mrs. Doting, missing the point by a mile, as usual. "Here he is way down in this dusty pit when he could be making big money back home. And all this 'roots' business. Tell me, is life meant for roots or for . . ."

"Yes, life is meant for finding our roots, Mom," said Vincent. "But you won't find anything conclusive by digging in this gorge. Life's too short and we're too faulty. We've got to discover a perfect source of knowledge."

"Ah. Perfection," said Rocky sarcastically.

"But that's what you're looking for, what you claim to have *found*—and in a bunch of scattered digs and a few broken bones. You look for broken bones. I'll look for a perfect person to give me perfect knowledge from a perfect book."

Mrs. Doting sighed and let the boys continue, hoping Vincent would win out.

Not that she was taking sides. She just didn't want Rocky living way out here in the wilds. Whatever Vincent's *Gītā* said, at least it brought him home for Christmas, and visiting him didn't require a mule.

NOTES

(*continued from page 36*)

In ISKCON, for example, if a woman has a child, she may be seen as not able to take part in the vital work of the community. So we in ISKCON are dealing with the same problem as industrialized women outside of ISKCON: whether to work or to care for the children.

The Vedic conception is that women *should* be mothers, that it is glorious to be a mother, and a religious duty. According to one Vedic saying, "Women become beautiful only after having a child." But if after having a child, they are treated by men as less productive or as useless members of the community—then what to do? Kaiśorī writes,

> I think the answer lies in the move toward self-sufficiency in rural farm projects. Then women can again take part in serving to fulfill the needs of family and community, in a respectful, anxiety-free way, with their children in tow. This will, of course, also be a struggle, because we are not trained to live like this. It requires simple living and high thinking and a real dedication to social change, even within ISKCON. It is a gradual process.

Of course, this is just one approach to a many-faceted problem. But Lorna Hoffman and others shouldn't think ISKCON is complacently sitting back with prejudiced attitudes toward women. If ISKCON is seen by some as behind the times in accepting women, they should not blame the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He did more than anyone to give women a chance for equal participation in the most important aspect of human endeavor: devotional service to God.

ISKCON does not intend to imitate extreme forms of feminism that bear the materialistic stamp, but by sincere dialogue and by trying to work out problems, devotees are making progress. If we succeed, then Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda will be pleased with us—because surely they intended that all men and women should live together happily in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in this life and in the next.—**SDG**

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

False Pride in a Foolish Age

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples and guests took place during a morning walk in Hamburg, in December 1969.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So last night at the lecture, our explanation of spiritual life was all right?

Disciple: Oh, yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda. And there would have been even more people present, but this is the week for the big world-championship football matches. So everyone tries to see those matches. Either they stay home and watch the matches on television, or they go out to the stadium. Everyone wants to see them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because they have been taught like that. What is their fault? They have not been taught the importance of human life. They have been taught "Eat, drink, be merry, and enjoy." That's all.

And then in your next life, become a dog. That's all. But people do not know. They simply say, "Never mind. I shall become a dog. After all, in my next life I will forget everything."

In the universe there are so many planets, so many different standards of life. But people know nothing. They do not know anything.

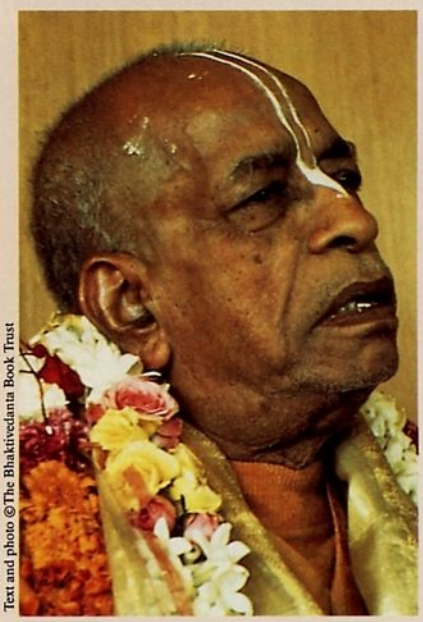
Guest: But beings on the other planets may have forms more spiritual than ours.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. They have material forms. For instance, although you cannot live within the water and only the fish can live within the water, still, a fish's body is not spiritual. It is material. Likewise, you cannot go to the sun planet, because for you that is a foreign atmosphere. But there are living entities who live on the sun planet. They have got their suitable material body.

Guest: But I think for the people all this is difficult to understand.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They are trained up to be fools. [*Laughter.*] How will they understand? They are simply fools, eating flesh and becoming like tigers and dogs. That's all. A tiger may be very strong, but what kind of brain has he got? No brain. [*Laughter.*]

To have a brain, one must be a *brāhmaṇa. Samo damas tapaḥ śaucam:* as



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Kṛṣṇa explains in *Bhagavad-gītā,* real intelligence means one must be peaceful, self-controlled, austere, and pure. To truly have a brain, one must be qualified spiritually. A tiger may attack me and kill me—he is very strong. But that does not mean he has got a better brain than me.

Guest: Yes, yes. I see.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So the modern civilization is making tigers—discovering the atomic bomb and teaching people how they can be physically strong and kill others. They are busy only in these things: the dog's business—how to attack another dog. That's all.

Guest: Your Diving Grace, this will be a very nice area here for your spiritual community.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, yes.

Guest: And I think you will provide a very, very good example for the people around here.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But the so-called advanced human beings—they come here for hunting. They come here to shoot animals.

Guest: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The animals—they are living peacefully in their own atmosphere. And these people—they come to kill them. This killing business has become very prominent at the present moment, and therefore so many humans are being killed in the very womb of their mother. Abortion—children killed. That people do not know. Nature will not excuse you. You are killing; you'll be killed within your mother's womb. You'll never see the light of the sun. You will go on being killed, life after life—as many lives as the number of animals you have killed. People do not know.

And the time will come in this age when there will be no food, and man will kill man and eat. That time is coming. Yes. They are now killing animals, but animals live on these grasses and grains. When there are no more grasses and no more grains, where will people get animals? They'll kill their own sons and eat them. That time is coming.

Nature's law is that you grow your own food. But people are not interested in growing food. They are interested in manufacturing bolts and nuts.

Guest: Manufacturing . . . ?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Bolts and nuts.

Guest: Yes, yes, yes. I see.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Factories. Big, big factories. So in time they will have to eat bolts and nuts. Where will they get food grains? They thought, "Let us eat the animals and manufacture bolts and nuts." But then, when all the animals are gone—then what will they eat?

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, the scientists are making artificial food. So they're not very worried.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, yes. That is why I'm talking of bolts and nuts. That "artificial food" means bolts and nuts. Somebody told me that the scientists have manufactured artificial butter, and when people ate it, they were vomiting. There is already ample butter supplied. Why are these rascals interested in manufacturing artificial butter to show off their scientific brains?

Just see what rascals they are! They think they can get unlimited quantities of butter, huh?—just as Kṛṣṇa was stealing unlimited quantities of butter from His mother and throwing it to the monkeys. Butter can be produced by the Lord's cows, so that everyone can eat sumptuously. But no. "Kill the animals, eat artificial butter, and vomit." That's all. Just see their intelligence. And they are proud of their advanced civilization.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

All Men—and Women—Can Know God

Lorna Hoffman, a *Back to Godhead* reader, wrote, "I was intrigued to read in the last issue that there existed a woman spiritual master in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, named Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā." But Lorna complained that Śrīla Prabhupāda omits mention of women in his writings. She quoted a sample: " 'We *can* know God, however, because He has communicated with men . . . ,' " and added, "Has Lord Kṛṣṇa not communicated also with countless women and children?"

"I would join your movement tomorrow," Lorna continued, "if it weren't for this solid wall of misogyny that I encounter at every turn. I find your magazine, and most of the individuals I've met, to be fairly friendly to women. The problem is Prabhupāda."

But in the samples Lorna quoted, Śrīla Prabhupāda intended no neglect of women. When he writes that God has "communicated with men," Prabhupāda is employing the convention that *men* or *mankind* includes women and children. Nowadays, of course, statements that employ the male gender are no longer seen as sufficient for addressing all humanity. A writer is expected to use neutral statements referring to "all persons" or else mention them specifically as men and women.

But although Prabhupāda's prose employs the older convention, it is unfair to accuse him of not including women in his invitation for all spirit souls to render loving service unto Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda was born in the late 1800s and educated in the early part of this century, before such changes in convention took place. Only in the quite recent past have writers and the reading public considered words like *he* and *mankind* to be exclusively addressed to men.

Conventions of the English language aside, we should understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda was very liberal in his distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially to women. Vedic culture emphasizes that women should be protected. Without neglecting this important principle, Śrīla Prabhupāda took a giant step forward by encouraging women to participate as active preachers in the important work of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda came to America, his free distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was revolutionary. In a purport in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.6.3) he explains his departure from the very strict separation of men and women that existed in traditional Indian society:

> In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement it has been very difficult to disassociate ourselves from women in our Society, especially in Western countries. We are therefore sometimes criticized, but nonetheless we are trying to give everyone a chance to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and thus advance spiritually.

Prabhupāda's attitude toward women was not demeaning or belittling. He saw them as equal to men:

> Since both boys and girls are being trained to become preachers, these girls are not ordinary girls but are as good as their brothers who are preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore to engage both boys and girls in fully transcendental activities is a policy intended to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. . . . We are thoroughly instructing both men and women how to preach, and actually they are preaching wonderfully. . . . Both men and women are preaching the gospel of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa with redoubled strength.
>
> (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.32, 37, purports)

By a superficial reading of Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports, one might think that Prabhupāda considered women allurements to make men fall into illusion. But the fact is that both women and men are lures for the opposite sex. When Śrīla Prabhupāda or any bona fide Vedic teacher says that woman is the cause of a man's fall-down, he actually means that woman is the downfall for a man and that *man is the downfall for a woman:*

> In these instructions of Lord Kapiladeva it is explained that not only is woman the gateway to hell for man, but man is also the gateway to hell for woman. It is a question of attachment. A man becomes attached to a woman because of her service, her beauty, and many other assets, and similarly a woman becomes attached to a man for his giving her a nice place to live, ornaments, dress, and children. As long as either is attached to the other for such material enjoyment, the woman is dangerous for the man, and the man is also dangerous for the woman. But if the attachment is transferred to Kṛṣṇa, both of them become Kṛṣṇa conscious and then marriage is very nice.
>
> (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.31.42, purport)

Prabhupāda, therefore, gave the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement the legacy of equality for women. It is also a fact that ISKCON is undergoing considerable soul-searching in trying to apply these principles in the context of modern society and at the same time faithfully follow the Vedic scriptures. At present, members of ISKCON are engaged in much discussion over this issue, and the public is also curious about what direction we will take regarding feminism.

Among the different opinions expressed by Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees, here is one I received in a letter from Kaiśorī dāsī, from Boston:

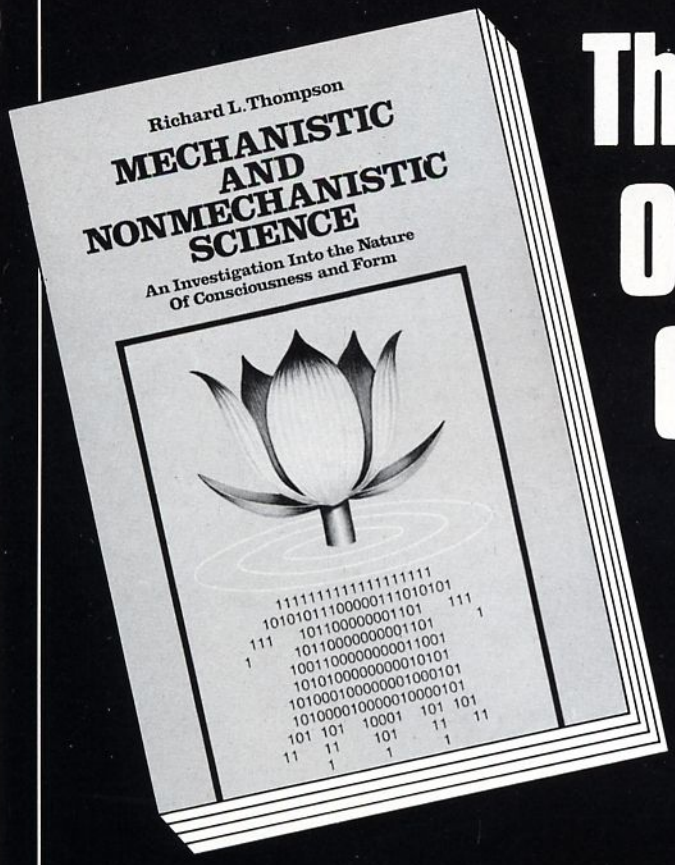
> I don't think that the position of women in ISKCON is much different from their position in any industrialized society. ISKCON may, perhaps, give a little more scope for demeaning women, although it is not really part of our philosophy or culture. But our main problem is that we are members of, and therefore influenced by, Western industrialized society.

Kaiśorī goes on to say that in traditional Vedic culture women had a strong role to play because they were involved in the economic base of maintaining the families. She writes,

> As we examine Vedic culture, we can see that while men pastured the cows (in the case of *vaiśyas*), women dealt with the by-product of cow protection: milk. They churned butter, made yogurt, and did whatever was necessary to preserve the quantity of milk (which was their wealth). They used it for the family or prepared the excess for sale. In this sense, women were *partners.*

Kaiśorī's point is that industrialization has changed all that. Now the economic base of the family is no longer centered in the home, and that leaves women in a double bind. They are forced to either leave their children or no longer participate in the economic survival of the family. If they don't go out and work, they are sometimes seen as less productive. And if they do renounce taking care of their children, then they suffer greater anxiety.

(*continued on page 34*)



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